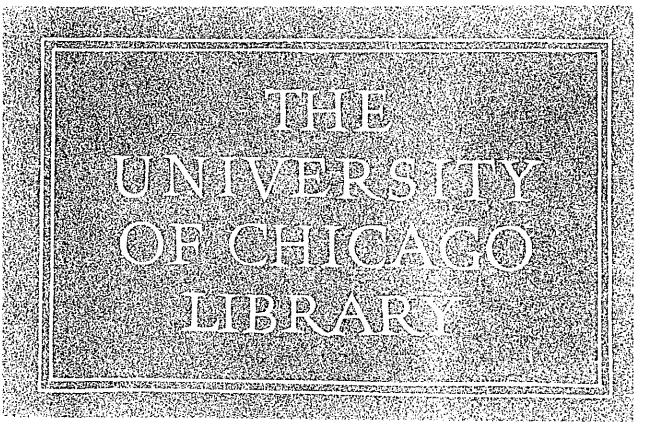

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CHRISTIANITY

VERSUS

SECULARISM.

A

PUBLIC DISCUSSION IN NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,

BETWEEN

THE REV. J. H. RUTHERFORD

AND

MR G. J. HOLYOAKE,

On the Evenings of 1st, 3rd, *and* 5th *August* 1853.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

ARRANGEMENTS for the following discussion had their origin in a bill published by the friends of George Jacob Holyoake, Esq., at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in the summer of 1852. That bill contained a general challenge, and the Rev. John H. Rutherford signified, through an agent, his readiness to debate with Mr Holyoake the points at issue: but this being on the night of his last lecture, and other engagements preventing Mr Holyoake from remaining longer in Newcastle at that time, the matter was not further agitated till Mr Rutherford found himself at liberty to renew his proposal, on the first of March last. The entire correspondence, consequent to this and preliminary to the debate, was published in the 'Christian News,' on the 13th and 20th of August. Two other letters followed, and these appeared in the same journal on the 27th of that month. The debate was held at Newcastle in the presence of crowded and well-conducted audiences, on the evenings of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th of August, and the whole was published in the 'Christian News' from 17th Sept. to 3rd Dec. inclusive.

Partly through our suggestion, the committee in Newcastle and the two gentlemen who sustained the debate, agreed to its publication, first in our columns, and secondly in a separate volume, which is now accomplished. The speeches were transmitted through the speakers to us for insertion in the 'News,' and the whole has been revised by them for the present publication.

In presenting the debate, in the following pages, to the reading public, we decline offering any remarks in this place on either side of the controversy. The subjects under discussion are of immense importance, and the debate, we doubt not, will help many to come to a righteous and safe decision. We are glad to say that the two speakers kept their tempers in perfect subjection throughout, and treated each other with courtesy and respect: and we trust the publication will have the effect of disarming prejudice, and of inducing its readers to examine, carefully and candidly, the sentiments of others, which may be antagonistic to their own.

SUBJECTS OF DEBATE.

FIRST NIGHT.

'Is Christianity Founded on Facts?'

SECOND NIGHT

(Proposed by Mr Holyoake.)

'Some of Christ's Precepts are Ambiguous, and some Impracticable.'

THIRD NIGHT.

(Proposed by Mr Holyoake.)

'Some of Christ's Teachings are Disastrous; and his Example, especially in respect to his Death, wanted force of Intellectual Character.'

CHRISTIANITY VERSUS SECULARISM.

FIRST NIGHT'S DEBATE.

SUBJECT.—'*Is Christianity founded on facts?*'

Mr JAMES CHARLTON, pursuant to arrangement, took the chair.

The CHAIRMAN said—Ladies and Gentlemen: We meet to listen to a discussion on the most important subject which can possibly occupy our attention. I hope during the time this discussion shall continue, you will listen in that calm spirit which the seriousness of the question demands of you; that you will approach it, like the speakers, in an earnest spirit, willing to arrive at the good, careful to distinguish and anxious to obtain and retain it. On both sides of the question, I hope you will listen quietly and soberly to the arguments which will be adduced in favour of Christianity and in favour of Secularism. The programme* placed in my hands gives as the first night's subject of discussion:

'The leading fact on which Christianity is founded is Justification by Faith. The moral fact upon which it is not founded is Justification by Conduct.'

I need not read farther, as I am anxious not to occupy your attention, seeing two hours and a half will be occupied in the

* This was an erroneous programme. The proposition read by the Chairman is a fragment of Mr Holyoake's explanation of his objections. The real and originally proposed proposition is the one at the head. *Vide* p. 2.

discussion; therefore, without further preliminaries, I introduce to you Mr George Jacob Holyoake, to open the question. (Applause.)

Mr HOLYOAKE said—Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen: As my reverend opponent has published a portion of the correspondence relating to this discussion, since, for some cause unknown to him, the seventh letter was omitted in the 'Reasoner' of last week, perhaps it is needful to say that it was omitted for two reasons—the first, because I had not time to read it, and the second, because there was no room to insert it. Besides, I did not think that there was any hurry about the publication, seeing that Mr Rutherford took twelve months to answer my first letter and three months to answer my second. I therefore could not make out why he should be in haste about the publication of the letters in their separate form; and as they appeared about four o'clock on Saturday evening, and I should be at hand on Sunday, led me to suppose that it was not a matter of importance, or I should very readily have published the correspondence quickly. The short points of importance are these:—Mr Rutherford said in his first letter, that first our proposition might be, 'Is Christianity founded upon facts?' In letter 2, I suggested that it might stand, 'Is Christianity founded upon *moral* facts?'—to avoid our running up and down the kingdom of facts, not knowing what facts were wanted. Mr Rutherford very hastily said in letter 3, that he was unable to understand what was meant by the proposition, 'Is Christianity founded on moral facts,' but he did not refuse to accept the phrase; and I had before told him, in letter 1, that I used it to avoid a discussion upon historical facts, and therefore I concluded the qualified proposition was tacitly agreed to and approved. Mr Rutherford may, however, have the proposition to stand as he pleases; but I have a right to make an inquiry, whether in this debate he speaks for my conversion, or does he wish me to speak for his? If he wishes to convert me, he must discuss *my* objections to Christianity; if he, however, does not wish to convert me, I confess, I do wish to convert him, and I will debate his reasons as far as I can, for I think (to use the language Christians frequently adopt) it is rather a sad thing that a young and earnest man should devote

his time to the advocacy of a form of Christianity which, in my opinion, involves serious moral error. The other preliminary point is this : Mr Rutherford having certainly misunderstood the correspondence which we had, he was good enough to name in his letter three propositions which he said might be subjects of discussion ; he also expressed a wish, in a subsequent letter, that I would name other propositions. I did not think it desirable to name any other propositions; I simply furnished him with three or four points illustrative of the manner in which I should justify my own opposition, and object to the points laid down ; and accordingly I informed him, at his request, that I should contend that Christianity was not founded upon moral facts; that its leading fact was justification by faith, whilst, according to my ideas, justification by conduct is a moral fact, but this is not the leading fact on which Christianity reposes. So that we meet, at present, I understand, to debate the proposition, either as Mr Rutherford put it, or as I suggested it, 'Is Christianity founded upon facts?' I am going to take exception to one of its facts, in order to narrow the debate to some intelligible point ; and accordingly I shall maintain that its leading proposition is justification by faith, that this is not a moral fact on which Christianity is founded. As, however, the general topic of discussion is named as a comparison of Secularism and Christianity, it will perhaps be useful to state briefly what is intended by what we call Secularism ; and you will see how out of this grows the importance which I attach to the proposition we have to debate. Secularism is a development of free thinking, including its positive as well as its negative side. Secularists consider free thinking as a double protest—a protest against speculative error, and in favour of specific moral truth. The term Secularism has not been chosen as a concealment or disguise, or as an apology for free inquiry, but as expressing a certain positive, ethical element, which the terms infidel, atheist, sceptic, do not express. When the term infidel is used to express fair dissent from Christianity, or sceptic to express honest doubt of the principles of Christianity, or atheist to signify pure intellectual inability to account for the origin of the universe, or accept the Christian theory of its government, the Secularist does not then object to the application of such terms to himself ; but as these terms usually, in the mind

of the Christian, denote guilt and dissent, he prefers the term 'Secularist' as expressive of the opinions which he holds to be affirmative and virtuous. A Secularist is one who gives primary attention to those speculations, the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. Secularism, looking over human society, discerns numerous persons who stand outside of Christianity, who, from conscientious reasons, reject one or other of its fundamental principles. At this point of sight a serious question arises: are good citizenship, personal virtue, a calm conscience, and fair desert in death, possible to such persons? Secularism undertakes to solve this problem, and to answer, yes. Its doctrinal basis is, that justification by conduct is a higher and more reliable truth than justification by faith; its object of study is the order rather than the origin of nature—the study of the laws and operations of nature being the most fruitful in practical guidance; its practical result is the discovery that science is the providence of man, and the development of that truth is a protection against false dependence; its theory of morals, that there exist guarantees of morality in human nature, in utility, and intelligence; its sphere of controversy, the criticism of sacred books and existing religions, only in those respects in which they seem to contradict ascertained moral truths, and are impediments to rational progress. The Secular Society seeks to diffuse these views, to promote approximation thereto, and to bring into concentrated action all who think secular principles pure and useful. Pure moralism is a term descriptive of the preceding characteristics of Secularism. The moral ground is their ground of unity. Many of the members of Secularist societies are not Christians, many are not theists in any sense, but many are theists, and many believe in the eclectic truth of the Scriptures; but these peculiarities are non-essentials to Secular unity. To be willing to work for the common good, and to see the possibility of doing it, and the innocence of doing it, independent of scriptural sanction, is the leading feature of Secularism. It holds, that he who means well and does well, deserves well both here and hereafter, whether he has or has not a sectarian creed or an orthodox faith. Secularists—at least the modern school of free-thinkers who have used that name—attach little or no importance to the argument of miracles or prophecy; neither inspiration nor the evidence of

the Fathers weighs with them, compared with moral argument; they try Christianity by its consonance with the moral sense—whatever is agreeable thereto they accept, without the authority of miracle, prophecy, or any historical attestation—but no attestation makes that cogent or acceptable in their eyes, which wants the approbation of pure, loving, humane conscience. I have interpolated this much of a description of Secularism generally, because it has sometimes been said—and I am not sure my rev. friend is not under the same impression—that we maintain what is called a discretionary silence, in some dishonest sense, about our principles. The mistake is in the meaning of the word 'discretionary.' I use it in the sense of relevance, as excluding from controversy that which does not belong to it, so as to present a case relevantly and clearly. That is the only discretionary silence we practice. All the principles essential in our own opinion, or in any manner for public guidance, we put forth distinctly and explicitly, without qualification and reserve of any kind. I shall be able to show, if time happen to fall to me, that in the creed which Mr Rutherford has furnished us with in his seventh letter, he observes a discretionary silence of no very different character to that which has been imputed to me—that he has omitted much which he ought not to have omitted, whilst he brings into the statement of his opinions every thing which he desires to have publicly known.

Briefly, not to waste words upon matters merely explanatory, I am going now to show that the doctrine of justification by faith is a scriptural doctrine, held by all the churches; that a man, in the eyes of religious people, cannot do good unless he has faith—that he cannot please God unless he has faith—that he cannot get to heaven unless he has faith—that he is justified or legalised, according to the law of God, by the act of faith—that this is an essential and leading principle of Christianity. Mr Rutherford has, for what reason I know not, or by what oversight I know not, committed himself to this declaration, in his seventh letter: 'I know of no Christian teacher, ancient or modern, who has represented justification by faith as the leading fact of Christianity.' Well, I suppose he does not know any person, ancient or modern, who has so represented it; but this I say, if he does not know them, he ought to know them,

for this is unquestionably a doctrine of importance. But I would first remark, that we are not to consider whether or not Christian writers so regard it; if he speaks for my improvement and instruction, it is enough for him to know that I regard it so; if he is here to argue as to the validity of my objections to Christianity, and to seek to remove them, it is sufficient for him that this appears to me a leading doctrine. But in Buck's Theological Dictionary, edited by the Rev. Dr Henderson, I find these words, 'The doctrine of justification, in the language of both Testaments, makes a very distinguished figure in the religion from above, and is a capital article of faith. Far from being merely speculative, it spreads its influence through the whole body of Christian divinity, runs through all Christian experience, and operates in every part of practical godliness. Such is its grand importance, that a mistake about it has a malignant efficacy, and is attended with a long train of dangerous consequences.' Again, Buck says: 'Not only is the Father concerned, but all the three persons of the Trinity are concerned in this grand affair, and each performs a distinct part in this particular work, as also in the whole economy of salvation.' Now, Dr Henderson and the rev. author of this dictionary are both authorities on the subject. The Rev. J. A. James lately published a sermon, which he had delivered in various parts of the country, and also at Oxford, where no minister would go unless he had made up his mind to preach opinions accredited by his own sect. He says: 'The great doctrine of justification by faith is not peculiar to any sect of the Evangelical Church.' Here, then, we have this doctrine distinguished as capital, comprehending the whole body of Christian divinity, running through every part of Christian experience, of transcendent importance, and as being, in the eyes of all divines, fundamental. But the Rev. J. A. James deals in further remarks on the clouds and darkness which veil this glorious doctrine, 'Justification by faith.' He says, 'how much this great fundamental Christian doctrine deserves our attention.' He then quotes Paul, that if even an angel preached any other doctrine, let him be accursed—'Why,' says Mr James, 'these thunder claps of holy indignation, why these lightning flashes of an exalted soul, but to terrify and blast and strike dead the man who would pervert the doctrine of justification which Paul thus identifies with the gospel of Christ.'

I have quoted these authorities for the purpose of pointing out that the doctrine is of importance; but Mr Rutherford may decide the matter as he pleases. If he agrees with these authorities, that faith is of capital importance, then it is right that we should consider it as fundamental; if he says that it is unimportant or of little importance, then I want to know why I may not be saved as well as my friend, although I have not his faith? I know Mr Rutherford will argue that the doctrine of the resurrection is the fundamental and capital article of the Christian faith; but unless I am justified by faith in Christ, what does it matter to me whether the dead rise or not—what does the resurrection of Christ matter to me, unless, being risen, I believe in him and find my justification? I have selected this doctrine, because we are entered upon a contest which I have desired to hold with Mr Rutherford, as from what I have heard of his preaching and known of his manner, I believe him to be a gentleman who will address himself pre-eminently to the consideration, whether or not Christianity is moral in its bearings. We stand before the world not able to hold the Christian faith, and if the doctrine be true, that we must believe certain things that we do not believe, then we plainly stand condemned before the world as unbelievers, and you are justified in the expressions which you employ to our disparagement. I am, therefore, bound to show, as I am prepared to show, that both Paul and James regard faith as being essential to justification—and by 'faith' I mean a belief in Christ, an acceptance of his ministry and office, or (as Mr Rutherford more largely states in one of his letters) an acceptance of the gospel of Christ. Now, I am not able to believe in this gospel; in my conscience I am not able to accept this doctrine—it seems to me immoral, injurious, hurtful, and could never have proceeded from a wise, just, and moral God. Having this conviction, my only enquiry is—Am I, therefore, to be exiled from heaven? If, hereafter, we stand at the bar of God, am I to be justified by any capacity for believing, or any capacity for working? I am willing to do all that can be done—I am willing to observe such conduct as shall be blameless before all men and blameless in the eyes of God; I will do the best I am able, and I claim that what I do shall be the ground of my justification, and not what I happen to believe. It seems to

me that you exercise an immoral influence when you make belief to be the source of justification. If you say to a man, conduct shall be a ground of justification, you give a premium to good conduct everywhere, whereas you now give a premium simply to believing, and discourage all those who cannot believe, placing them (according to your theory) out of the possibility of being accepted by God. This doctrine seems to me hurtful and misleading. I know very well Mr Rutherford may say, the only justification possible, in the sight of *men*, is justification by conduct; but this is turning away from the argument we have to consider. The question is not, whether we are justified before our fellow-men by conduct, but whether conduct will not justify us in the sight of *God*. That is the point I seek to establish, and will lay down broadly, that the man that means well and does as well as he is able, deserves well of mankind, and ought to secure favour both here and hereafter, whether he believes as my friend or not. I say pointedly, what my friend believes has nothing to do with his right to salvation and his right to heaven, and he who preaches any other doctrine preaches a hurtful doctrine; and although it is a doctrine of Scripture, it is not a doctrine of humanity—it cannot encourage good works and promote the welfare of mankind.

In the correspondence, Mr Rutherford has observed, that those who read the Scriptures in the light of common sense find the authorised version sufficient for their purpose, but fault-finding critics, when they debate, insist upon a strictly literal interpretation of biblical terms—a canon which, he says, cannot be universally applied, with justice, to any language. I beg to say, I am not a fault-finding critic; I never read the Bible in my life to find fault with it; I always read it to see how much I could find which I approved, and I only complain of that over which I naturally and inevitably stumble. I do not want my rev. friend to give me a literal interpretation of Scripture; I do not care whether you make it metaphorical, symbolical, or literal; you must bring out a moral import, and compare it with ordinary notions of morality. If you say, we are to believe, and that a man will be condemned because he does not believe, then you exalt the mere act of faith over the nobler act of doing—you exalt words over works; and that, in my opinion, is an immoral thing. I only want that the

doctrine itself shall be moral. I shall, in what I next say, show from the writings of Paul and the other apostles, that the doctrine of justification by faith is perfectly Scriptural; I have hitherto been content to prove that it is an important doctrine, and one worthy of consideration.

Mr RUTHERFORD then rose. He said—Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen: By me this discussion has neither been sought nor avoided. Not fearing to take up the gauntlet which was so boldly thrown down by Mr Holyoake's friends during his visit to this town three years ago, to discuss the relative merits of Christianity and Atheism, I stood forward to give a reason of my faith, feeling that it only required to be clearly stated to sweep away a host of the most plausible and popular objections urged against it. That there were in this town ministers, if not private Christians, capable, from their studies, experience, and talents, of giving a better account of the great argument, I had no doubt; that any of them dreaded the most sifting investigation of their principles I had no reason to believe; but they might not feel justified in leaving their walks of usefulness for the arena of debate, and in wasting in controversies which have been revived and settled a hundred times, in strifes of words, and in personal polemics, the energy which might be devoted to the less exciting but not less honourable work of disseminating truth, which in their own experience had proved redolent of purity and love. Let the working classes who have heard lectures on 'Why do the clergy avoid discussion?' be assured that there are thousands of Christians who, though they do not feel called upon publicly to debate with every one who may question their faith, neither avoid nor discourage investigation; and that a system, which teaches us to 'prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good,' is the enemy neither of free inquiry nor of independent action. That the present discussion did not take place three years ago was no fault of mine; had Mr Holyoake come, at that time, as was intimated, to deliver his lectures, I would not have been unwilling to make some such arrangement as has now been made. The correspondence which has taken place preliminary to this debate, and now published, will explain the reasons why it has been delayed so long, and will prove that

we do not take credit for a pledge to submit our principles to examination which we were not prepared to fulfil. I have not the greatest confidence in public discussions; but when they are conducted in a fair, calm, unbiassed, and truth-seeking disposition, they may be productive of real benefit. The danger is, that for the sake of effect, declamation may be substituted for reasoning, and sallies of wit for argument; that amid the excitement of party feeling which may be produced, the balance of sober judgment may be held with unsteady hand, and prejudice and passion may triumph over principle. If I plainly state what I think in reference to Secularism, it is from no disrespect of the advocate and no unkindness towards him; the spoken and written statements of those who come forward to enlighten and lead the people are public property, and it is for us thoroughly to sift their statements.

In reference to the letters which have been printed, I have to state, that my friend Mr Holyoake has made a mistake as to the time which elapsed before I answered his communication. The reason why I did not answer it immediately is stated in my letter in reply to him. Mr Holyoake explains that the reasons why the seventh letter did not appear in the 'Reasoner' of last week were, that there was not space for it, and that he had not read it. Now, had I known that there was not room for it, or that Mr Holyoake had not read it, though it had been in his possession nearly a fortnight, I should certainly not have published the correspondence without his consent, although as it is, I do not see that I have, and I hope I have not, done him any injustice. I consented to their publication in the 'Reasoner' only on condition, that if he published any of the letters he must be quite sure to publish them all.

What is the leading fact in Christianity? This question Mr Holyoake wishes me distinctly to answer. I have stated in my letters to him that I regard the leading fact in Christianity as the resurrection of Christ. Justification by faith, as presented to us in some of the extracts which Mr Holyoake has read, is a great doctrine of Christianity; that I do not for a moment deny; and I am exceedingly thankful that in this debate we have to consider not so much the great broad question of Christianity, as the particular objections that Mr Holyoake has to the system. This was

the reason why I requested him in one of my letters to state what were his objections. I think that no good can come to those who are Secularists and to my friend by taking the question generally, and avoiding the very objections which they particularly urge against the system; and therefore I shall at once proceed to the great question of justification by faith. (Applause.)

I have most care fully examined all the works which Mr Holyoake has written, so far as I know them, and have considered all the objections which he has urged to this doctrine. The great objections urged against it by him seem to be these; first, that it is superfluous, as it is alleged that man can be saved by his innocence; that it is arbitrary, making salvation depend upon opinion; that it is degrading, as it makes his justification rest for its ground on the righteousness of another; that it is disastrous, representing man as blameworthy for his unbelief; and that it is immoral, as leading to a neglect of duty. These I think are the only objections I can find in his writings to this leading doctrine of Christianity. If, however, he has any other objections we shall hear them. Now, in order to establish these points, he would require to show that man is innocent, that truth can benefit the mind without being believed, that it is a degradation to receive a free gift which comes to you honourably, that man is in no way responsible for his faith, and that, as a matter of fact, those who really believe this doctrine and enjoy forgiveness are demoralised by it. Has our friend to-night established any of those points? And if he should prove, and what he has hitherto signally failed in doing, that it is a matter of perfect indifference what a man believes, it would not establish Secularism, it would not cut any block of enduring granite out of the quarry in which he toils so hard, on which we could securely build; it would recoil upon his own position and become self-destructive. How does he reconcile his professed indifferentism about faith with a twelve years' crusade against Christianity? If belief matters not, why then, the teachings of those whom he calls priests can do no harm, and his own teachings can do no good. Either a man's views are of some importance, or the principles of Secularism are worthless. Mr Holyoake may choose which horn of the dilemma he prefers. If a man's faith is of no moment, then Secularism is of no manner of use. If it has any salvation for

man, that salvation, it seems, cannot be enjoyed without faith in its principles, and the objection to salvation by faith is given up.

We are not satisfied, however, to rebut the objection generally; we believe that the Bible doctrine of justification is, as a matter of theory, perfectly accordant with the philosophy of mind, and, as a matter of fact, permanently productive of the most blessed results in the hearts and lives of those who receive it, and live under its influence. This we shall now endeavour to show, and the simple statement of the Bible doctrine will itself sweep away a host of objections which spring from misconceptions of the subject.

There are three classes of texts to which we should give attention; those which speak of a justification in the sight of God by faith only, those which treat of a justification in the sight of men by righteous and beneficent conduct as the fruit of faith, and those which represent men as being justified at last according to their works as springing from righteous conduct. Though it is not necessary to enumerate the passages, it may be useful to give one or two texts as the type of each class. For specimen of the first you may turn to Romans iv. 5: 'But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' For a specimen of the second, we have, James ii. 14, 18: 'What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?' Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. And a specimen of the third class you have in 2 Cor. iv. 10: 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' These statements are not conflicting and contradictory. They are just so many different views of the same great blessing, the first representing incipient justification as that immediate deliverance from condemnation, and that introduction into a state in which he is treated as if he were righteous, which consciously takes place when he believes the gospel; the second the subsequent justification of his faith in the

sight of his fellow-men by a life in harmony with the truth—a life proving the sincerity of his profession, and the reality of his faith; and the third, his final justification at the bar of God, affording a vindication of the moral administration of the universe in reinstating in glory those who have submitted to the authority and the laws of the one Divine Mediator. They no more conflict with each other than do the three gases of which our atmosphere is composed, or the different rays which constitute the light of the sun. They are inter-dependent and mutually harmonious; and to understand them thoroughly is to get rid of all the objections urged against the doctrine, and to solve the seeming discrepancies between Paul and James.

There are distinct classes of persons to whom the different aspects of the subject are respectively applicable, thus evidencing not only the harmony of truth, but its adaptedness to the real condition of man. Paul wrote to overthrow the Phariseeism which was so prevalent among the Jews, James to counteract the Antinomianism which began to appear in the Church itself. Paul laboured to prove the impossibility of being justified before God by works which lack the great principle of obedience—love; James sought to show the utter worthlessness of any faith that does not save from sin, and evidence itself in a holy and benevolent life. When we quote any passage, therefore, to prove that Christianity requires justice, integrity, purity, and good works, it is vain to quote a score of passages which give us to understand that a man is justified by faith, to disprove. They are certainly both there—not as opposites, but as cause and effect; 'faith worketh by love.'

The charge urged against the doctrine is that it disparages virtue. Now, let us look carefully at each of the three views of the subject, to see whether the charge does not retort upon the objector.

Take the first position:—The only justification that is possible in the sight of God is a justification by faith. This is substantially the doctrine that Paul sought to establish. Does it disparage virtue? Let us see.

Accountability is a matter of almost universal consciousness among men. It exists more or less in every land. The processes of reasoning, and the truths of revelation, may deepen the sense

of it, but it is there before them. An impression of moral responsibility naturally springs up in the human mind. Men may deny the existence of a material world, and may perplex ordinary minds with their sophistical arguments, but the universe is there, is around us after all. Men may plausibly argue that we are the creatures of a stern necessity, but we are free after all. So may they tell us that our sense of responsibility is a delusion, but we are accountable still. It is as impossible to free ourselves of our responsibility as it is to rid ourselves of existence. This may be disputed, but what has not? It may be regarded as one of the dogmas of theology, which the controversy of four thousand years has not settled; but it is one of the laws of your mental and moral constitution. To a great extent it may have been effaced from the human mind, but the cases are rare in in which no trace of it is left. Long years of sin may dull and dim and deaden the moral sense, but still there are seasons in the lives of the most hardened when it seems to awake from its torpor. You may find me some savage tribe where the sense of responsibility is exceedingly feeble, but I know of none where it exists not at all. And even were such a tribe to be found, or were there found a few isolated individuals scattered here and there among different nations who have no sense of duty to a being superior to themselves, they are a mere fraction compared with the millions who manifestly feel that they are accountable creatures. You may, perchance, bring me among them some philosopher who has reasoned himself out of it: but after a few interrogations you perceive that he can as calmly, and as easily too, reason himself out of the belief that there is a material universe. It is, at least, an undeniable fact, that the great majority of men in all ages and in all lands, have had a sense of responsibility: — a fact that stands out in bold relief in the world's history, and which embodied itself in the almost universal sacrifices of heathenism. We may be told that it is a doctrine which the priests have invented to procure and maintain a mighty influence over the minds of men, but it would be far more philosophical to argue that the doctrine has made the priests. It is most absurd to attribute any universally diffused mode of feeling to the interested teachings of one class. But the thing can be brought home to our bosoms and tested there. What means

that word remorse? And how shall we account for the thing as a matter of experience on the supposition that man is not responsible? Is there one in this vast assemblage who does not know the meaning of that word? Need any of you consult our great lexicographers, or our philosophers to ascertain its import? Its import you have been painfully taught in the school of your own deep and imperishable consciousness. As a witness, that feeling proclaims our accountability, and as a prophet it heralds a coming judgment. It is man's dread prerogative as a moral and voluntary agent, entrusted with his own welfare and that of others. It depends not upon any human teaching, though that may modify it; it is a necessary and unvarying accompaniment of man's moral nature. When it has fully possessed the soul, what a hell does it create within, leaving its victims no need to suppose any physical suffering as indispensable to future woe. How has it maddened the soul! How has it made this bright earth appear a gloomy prison! How has it darkened the sun of the soul, happiness, and made existence itself, seem a terrible curse. I do not mean that its influence has been so terrible in your own experience, but do you not feel it capable of doing all this? and can you deny the testimony that it bears to the fact of your responsibility?—Tell me not that these feelings are altogether factitious, that they are instilled into our minds by a fond mothers' instructions, or by the teachings of ministers, from policy or self-interest; and that the sensualist and the profligate could have proceeded in their selfish and criminal course, but for such influences. How, then, is it that men who have never sat under the preaching of the gospel, and have been free from all the restraints of kind parental teaching, and holy parental example, or who have effaced all such impressions from their minds, have still, according to their own confession, terrible seasons of compunction, and are utterly unable to rid their minds of the thought of an Omniscient Judge, and a future retribution? Even where the moral sense has been most seriously outraged,—in the man whose conscience seems seared, whose heart is most hardened, whose life is most reprobate—if you follow him to his retirement you will find that, in moments of calm reflection, the unwelcome idea of responsibility presses upon his mind, and the dread of an invisible power and a future reckoning cannot be averted or destroyed.

Now, if it is denied that we need justification on the ground of irresponsibility for our conduct, let us distinctly know that we may meet you there and form a proper estimate of your moral system. If irresponsibility is one of your guarantees of morality, we need no further proof that your morality is but a dream. You may tell us that there are distinctions between virtue and vice, but are not these distinctions without a difference if man is not responsible? Why should you call one man virtuous and another man vicious, if both of them are mere puppets in the hands of an inexorable necessity?

But you put in a plea of innocence. You tell us that is the only thing with which we can meet destiny without fear. You demand, then, a legal justification. You will not have salvation unless at the bar of God. You are declared not guilty of any breach of law. Nothing will satisfy you short of the affirmation that you have committed no crime. What, then, is this? You brave the closest investigation of your conduct, the most searching inquiry into the principles of your life, into the motives which have given character to your actions; you demand that the arcana of your heart be subjected to the most fiery ordeal, and you will stand or fall, according to the result. Now, I ask, on what ground do you expect a verdict of 'not guilty'? Is it because your own conscience does not accuse you? Is it because you have ever acted justly towards the persons, the interests, the characters of your fellowmen? Is it because you have the deep consciousness that you have never sinned against God? If so, then I hesitate not to tell you, that however you may be satisfied with your position, it is one which your fellowmen cannot occupy. All the forces of your propagandism, all the sophisms of your logic, and all the ornaments of your rhetoric may be put into requisition to convince the world that it is innocent, but the conscience of universal humanity seared and benighted as it is, will reject the plea. (Loud applause.)

But your plea, perhaps, is not that of absolute, but of comparative innocence; it is not that you have done as well as you are required to do, but as well as you can. You tell us you believe that no just God will condemn you if you do as well as you are able. I will not deny that in this instance at least you believe rightly. If you can make it out that you have felt, thought, and

acted justly towards others, as you have had capability and opportunity, that you have never wilfully, from the first moment of your moral consciousness, neglected your duty to your Creator or your fellowmen, then certainly you will have a claim to future happiness which justice will not despise. You come to the Judge of all and demand acquittal on the ground that you have done your best; you will not condescend to appeal to mercy. Is it so, then, that you have the temerity to abide by this test? Cowardice may not come to the man who is conscious that he has had no selfish feelings, no sinister motives, who knows that he has ever done his best for the honour of his Maker, and the welfare of his neighbour. But do you mean to say that you have this consciousness? Whether you can establish in the court of your own conscience what you think of proving at the bar of God, I do not know; only, even supposing you could, it would be well to remember that God is greater than your conscience, and knoweth all things. But, granting that you were acquitted on the ground of your innocence—the very hope of which, we fear, will prove a vain delusion—what will be the value of your theory to those who are as deeply conscious that they have done wrong as that they exist? To tell them that they will deserve heaven if they do as well as they are able, will but mock the misery of men, who know that they have not done their best, and who have disabled themselves from doing what they might have accomplished had they not by sin diminished their physical strength and their mental energy. If in this dilemma you seek to convince them that they should not blame themselves but their circumstances, you will present to them one of the choicest Secularist guarantees of morality, which the most selfish and abandoned of men will receive with unbounded satisfaction, but which it requires amazing credulity to believe.

But the ground is shifted again. You admit the fact that all has not been right, but seek to palliate and excuse it. This, then, is a silent admission that the law of God is better than your life, and that Christian morality is at least purer and higher than that which has its guarantees in human nature.

But let us look at the worth and weight of your grounds of extenuation. You plead guilty to the charge of violation of the all-perfect law; but you bring forward an excuse, in which you

claim a right to do as you have done, or at least that you could not help yourself; just as if a person had killed another, and in a court of justice, while admitting the fact, he alleges that it was done in pure self-defence, or by an unavoidable accident, and without his consenting thereto. Now, if you can clearly substantiate such a plea, it will no doubt be a sufficient ground for your justification. The burden of proof, however, lies with you. Can you, then, prove that you have always done your best? Can you make it out that you have been utterly misled by your own consciousness, and that when you thought you might have done better, this was absolutely impossible? But you ask, Who gave man an imperfect nature? Where, however, is the proof that man's nature was originally imperfect? 'It fell,' you say. But, in reply, I would ask, Whether is a being who is free to choose the good and reject the evil—a being capable, from his freedom, of the most exalted virtue and happiness, or a being who is the creature of a stern necessity, the most perfect? Is not reason higher than instinct, though the one moves on unerringly, and the other is liable to error? Is not man better than a sheep, because man can sin and the sheep cannot? and the very capability of being a demon proves the capability of being a seraph.

You object to the greatness of temptation to which man is exposed. But who does not see that the more a man's virtue is tested, and stands firm, the higher is the happiness which it brings him. Which do you admire most, the being who is carried forward in one undeviating course, by an inevitable necessity, incapable of virtue, because the creature of circumstances, or the man who, like 'Uncle Tom,' with the most powerful temptations to succumb, with the instruments of death before him, in the face of the most brutal ferocity, and the most diabolical rage, in the moral heroism of conscious freedom and integrity, when commanded on pain of death to yield, can calmly say, '*I can die*'? Why are we thrilled with that lofty answer? Because it is full of the majesty of virtue. Why? but that we know that he might have done otherwise, and that he had strong inducements to do otherwise. Why are our souls filled with unutterable detestation at the conduct of Legree? Why cannot we find any excuse for him? Just because we believe that he was under no necessity to act as he did. You speak of the power of motives

to do evil, but may not the will choose the motive under which it acts? Does it lay aside its sceptre in the presence of the mightiest conceivable motives? Is it not arbiter still? Can it not triumph over the greatest difficulties?

But the ground is shifted again, and we are taught if sin is our crime and not our misfortune, that we can expiate it ourselves. Now it is our *crime*, but can we expiate it? How many of its influences upon others are beyond our recall! We cannot annihilate them; and as our sins seem thus to live in future generations here, who can say that they will not tell upon the eternal destinies of others; for you cannot make us sure of annihilation at the grave. A stone is thrown into the centre of a lake, and produces an impression which is at first visible in the ripples made on the glassy surface,—an impression which does not cease till it has reached the farthest shore, and affected the position of every drop of water there. Thus it is with our conduct; we are always, and in all circumstances, producing impressions upon others. By sin we have produced the most disastrous impressions. One unkind word may have broken the harmony of another's being for life; one unholy look may have sown seeds in other's hearts which will ripen to the most debasing sensualism, and the most appalling misery; one thoughtless act may blight a soul for eternity. Sin is no trifle. We have seen it is not. It is recorded in the past. It is a matter of fact. We cannot rid ourselves of it; we cannot expiate it; we need an expiation, and, therefore, we need a doctrine such as that propounded by Paul —that 'a man is justified by faith, and not by the works of the law.' (His time being exhausted, Mr Rutherford then resumed his seat amid cordial applause.)

Mr HOLYOAKE:—It has gratified me to learn that the majority present in this meeting are Christians. It must seem to many persons of that persuasion, that there is something singularly improper or unhappy in one avowing opinions so contrary to those you have just heard enunciated, as it falls to my lot to avow. It occurs to me to suggest to many who have not thought on the subject before, that, for reasons which my reverend friend does not seem at all to understand, it is of as much importance to me by what light I walk

from the cradle to the grave as to himself. Each man, according to your own Christian theory, has to answer for himself hereafter. I therefore cannot, and would not willingly, go to the bar of God with any man's second-hand opinions. Where I must answer for myself, I must think for myself. Mr Rutherford will assure me it is a doctrine of Scripture. I know it is the doctrine of one part, although very sadly contradicted elsewhere, that we are to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. Very well; but of what value is that, if a man is not to hold fast to that which he thinks good? If I am to prove all things, and hold fast to that which you think good, what is that but the old Popish doctrine—inquire for yourself, but think as the Church thinks in the end? The maxim, unless admitted broadly, is of no value. If I am to prove all things, I understand by it that I am to hold fast to that which I believe to be good; and if this is the license you will give me as a man, how dare you say it will not be given by God? If I am justified in the eyes of my fellow-men, in inquiring for myself, and coming to my own conclusion, how dare you say I shall not be held innocent in the sight of God? Here lies the key to the question we are now debating. Is my conscientious opinion possible? and if possible, will it justify me? Will God hold me responsible, because I cannot in my conscience accept certain things given to me in a book which you call God's word, but which I cannot believe to be his word? But, then, you will say I am free—you will tell me that we have the Protestant right of private judgment. What does that mean, unless it justifies dissent? How dare you say I have a right to think for myself, unless it is innocent to differ? I have no right to think for myself, unless I have also the moral right to come to my own conclusion; and if I have a right to come to my own conclusion, I ought to be held innocent, not only in the eyes of man, but of God, unless you lay down for God a principle of moral procedure which man would not recognise. Secularism seeks for harmony between the moral instincts of man and the reputed judgments of heaven. Whatever a man's conscience dictates to be right, that, we say, ought to be his justification. The moral government which, in human things, we consider just and proper, ought to be an index to the illimitable munificence of the moral judgments of God; for if God exists, he must be essentially moral;

and hence the conclusion to which we come is a just conclusion. My friend has been good enough to say that I shall allege that Christianity was invented by priests—all that may appear relevant to some people, although I do not know to whom, but I will say it has no relation to me. I know Christians who hold their opinions conscientiously; and I hold mine in self-defence, not because they differ from yours—not from any vain desire for singularity, or disreputable love of notoriety, or for the sake of appearing different from other men—all these motives are ignoble, and unworthy of a serious man's consideration. I hold my opinions because I find the justification for them in my conscience. If I have to answer for myself, I must, in self-defence, think for myself; and unless the world is prepared to answer for me, the world has no right to dictate to me its faith.

Before I proceed farther, I wish to thank Mr Rutherford for the publication of the correspondence which has passed between us. The letters have given the people of this town [Newcastle-on-Tyne] an opportunity of understanding how the whole matter stands; and so far from believing the act improper, I believe Mr Rutherford incapable of doing wrong consciously. I remain under no impression that he has done me any injustice, but what was strictly right and proper for him to do.

We will now address ourselves mainly to the argument of this evening. I read the doctrine of justification to stand thus:—First, I will take the Apostle Paul. 'By the deeds of the law,' says the apostle, 'no flesh shall be justified in God's sight.' 'A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' 'For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' 'Now to him that worketh is the reward, not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' 'Now, therefore, in that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, it was not written for his sake alone, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' So far has Mr Rutherford failed in under-

standing our position, that our objections to these passages are diametrically opposite to what he supposed. Here God declares that he will justify the ungodly; now we say, that to justify the ungodly, while they are ungodly, is neither moral nor useful—it is an immoral act, judging it by human judgment. It may be painful to Christians to hear this language, but they must allow us to judge Christianity as they would Mahomedanism, or any other religion before them; and so judging it, by human judgment, we say there ought to be no justification until the day of reformation sets in—so far are we from being disposed to authorise any form of offence, as Mr Rutherford supposes. Now, hear James, almost the opposite of Paul, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, that a man says he hath faith, and have not works, can faith save him? Was not Abraham our father justified by works? His faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which said, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Ye see, then, how by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.' That is a singular argument of James, because he tells us Abraham was justified by works that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which says he was justified by faith; but I pass this by. Paul says a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law; James says he is justified by works and faith; Paul says Abraham was justified by faith; James, that he was justified by works. Now, James teaches the nobler doctrine, but Paul is the higher authority. Paul heard the voice of Christ after he was risen; Paul had been caught up to the third heaven, and had seen what no man had ever seen before, and had heard things which is not possible for man to utter; he ought, therefore, to be well informed on the subjects on which he writes. This is not a matter of idle conjecture—the Holy Spirit of God, we are told, dictated what Paul wrote, and if we are not to believe Paul, whom can we believe? Now, my objection is, that whilst Paul says we cannot be justified by works, and James more usefully asserts that works must go to assist faith—they both prescribe, in addition to works, that there shall be faith—mark you, not faith in works. Mr Rutherford demands of me whether faith is not necessary to working, and whether we are indifferent as to what people believe. We are not indifferent to what people believe, but our argument

is, that both James and Paul, in addition to the faith which makes you work, insist on a special faith or belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. With every conscientious work, there must be inspiring faith, but the faith of the apostles is supplementary to that which inspires work; for, according to them, good and useful works are of no avail to a man, unless he has also faith. My friend will perhaps say, do I mean to assert that a man can be moral without working morally, and that no Christian has been inspired by faith to do good works? No; unquestionably many persons have been inspired to do good works by Christian faith; and all those people have been improved, made more moral and useful, in consequence of their faith. My objection is, that according to their creed, my earnest working will not justify me unless I have their particular faith. That is where I think I see immorality; for it is as impossible to teach all mankind one rule of faith, as to cure all diseases by one remedy. What would you say to the physician, who, going into an hospital, and seeing patients suffering under a hundred different diseases, should give to me a prescription and say, 'Hand it round, it is to cure you all'? One prescription of medicine will not cure different diseases, and how can one prescription of faith suit the diversity of human understanding and condition which the world everywhere manifests? What we contend for is, that the man who has honest, serious, deliberate, conscientious faith in the work he does, that that faith shall be, in the eyes of God, his justification. We say you discourage that man by declaring that while his works will not save him, faith will do so; you thus give a lower premium to working than you do to believing. In believing there is no virtue. Show me the necessary weight of evidence, and you command my judgment without any power of my own. Did you ever hear of Shakspere, Bacon, Newton, or any of those kingly intellects in the regions of science, song, or philosophy, going about the world and requesting to be believed, and that all men should do homage to them? No; in the lordliness of their own intellect, they put before mankind their sublime discoveries, and thus they win the willing homage of the whole world. They know man has no power, and wishes to have no power to resist the overwhelming weight of imperial evidence in favour of truth. They don't say 'belief is a virtue,'

but they say, 'here is the evidence, and if you listen to it, in time you will be compelled to believe.' But Christianity takes a lower, humbler ground, instead of proudly and pre-eminently commanding our suffrages by its intrinsic evidence; it comes beseeching our conviction, and dealing out penalties for unbelief.

There is another point which Mr Rutherford by no means sees—in fact he sat down uttering a fallacy which lies at the foundation of his misconception of this argument. He is supposing all along that we object in some immoral way (not in intention, for he is too honourable a man to impute this to us, but he seems to think our doctrine involves the immorality) to responsibility for opinion, and that we are blind to the fact that it is important what a man believes. Now, we consider it is of the utmost importance what a man believes; for out of conviction will grow conduct, and out of conduct will grow a useful or baneful influence on mankind. We acknowledge this broadly, and we go further—if our life extends to another world, undoubtedly we shall carry our convictions and capacities, and the consequences of our errors, with us. Hence, therefore, we say to every man, improve the present, seek to better the condition of humanity; for if you suffer wrong and injustice to reign, their consequences may extend for ever. No man can give you back the time you lose, and as every act is of importance, improve the present opportunity. But Christianity comes in here with something in addition, and attaches reward to faith, and punishment to disbelief. I read with utter astonishment a passage in one of my friend's letters, wherein he states that an item of my creed is, that it would either be unjust or inconsistent in God to allow sin to develop its natural results. I do not say that it would be unjust or inconsistent at all; on the contrary, I say that it is certain sin will develop its results. But what is the argument of my friend? It has not yet come out with sufficient plainness; but his theology teaches him that in addition to these natural results, eternal perdition and horrible anguish will be superadded for the errors we commit in this life. Here lies what I think the shocking depravity of his doctrine—that we should have a just God of infinite love, and that he, not content with the natural results of sin—with the misery that does belong to sin, and which follows it everywhere like the shadow of death—should superadd condign punishment in a lake

which burns with fire and brimstone. That is the horrible condition attached to the doctrine of justification by faith, against which we protest. We are willing to take the natural results of sin as well as yourselves; we do not object to responsibility, provided it be moral. If the punishment be just, inflict it—the manly spirit will not shrink from that which it perceives it really deserves; but let the punishment not be infinite and eternal—let it have some proportion to the offence—let the element of reformation be in it; let it not be unending torture and undying revenge. If we are to be responsible, surely we ought to be responsible not for faith, but for conduct. If I, adopting one set of opinions, in consequence of difference of view, should lose the light of which you consider yourselves fortunate in possessing, and should stumble on in darkness, ought I, in addition to the evils arising from that state, to incur superadded misery and punishment; and instead of being justified, sent into outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, for no other fault than because I conscientiously followed some other light than yours, your light and your road appearing to me to lead not to happiness, but to destruction? You see, therefore, that my rev. friend has a much more practical question to deal with than he had supposed. He has read me an admirable homily on justification by faith, which in its way is as excellent as anything I have listened to for a long time. It has only one fault—it does not apply to me at all. We are not here to discuss why we do not believe; there is the fact. You dare not say we are not conscientious, because if you do you give us the right to say, You are not conscientious. And if you begin by disbelieving our word, we may begin by disbelieving yours. Then your mission to us for good is thereby closed. We take the honest ground — we conscientiously differ, and we want to know why we should not be justified by God as well as you? You have good conduct and a sincere faith —I have, I hope, useful conduct, and I am sure I have a sincere faith. Why should not my sincere faith and useful conduct be as acceptable in the sight of God as yours? I know that the Christian's faith implies good works. It was Sir James Mackintosh, I think, who said of Luther, that he taught no other doctrine of faith than this—that faith was the animating

spirit which enabled a Christian to perform good works. In that sense there is a purity and a morality about faith; but if that be your doctrine, and it is the only one which a wise man will continue to defend, it justifies me as well as yourself; for why should not the faith in humanity which animates me to good works, and to seek by every means to advance and benefit my fellow creatures, be my salvation, just as you hope your conviction in the truth of Christianity will be yours? I will put the question thus before Mr Rutherford's consideration—Good works, every Christian asserts, is the test and fruit of the true faith; then, if we have the test and the fruit, how do you know that you only have the true faith? If we have the test of faith, how know you that we have not the faith itself? You say faith itself is but the means of producing moral results—you cannot defend faith on any other than the plain, narrow ground, that it produces good conduct; if, then, by our principles we produce good lives, why is not our faith as good as yours? Will God, sitting as the supreme judge of human conduct, reject our sincere and earnest efforts after virtue and truth, and pronounce our conduct as meriting eternal condemnation, whilst yours shall receive eternal reward, for no other reason than because there is a difference in our faith? Will you not rather believe that God, whom, you proudly say, is no respecter of persons, is also no respecter of faiths?

There is one point remaining for me to notice. Mr Rutherford said, with a good deal of emphasis, By what right do we say that a man is virtuous or vicious, if he is the puppet of circumstances? I will answer this by putting another—How is it that men go to California for gold, and would not go for iron? Every Christian knows that both gold and iron are the puppets of circumstances, yet men will go to the ends of the world for the one, and would not go to the door for the other. The reason is, one is of great commercial value, the other is of little value. So with human character and conduct. All men ought to be judged primarily with reference to the condition in which they are placed; but, irrespective of condition, we call that man virtuous who acts usefully towards himself and others, and that vicious who abuses his privileges, and neglects opportunities of doing good to himself and others. And as we are not even legally disposed to torture those who are vicious, but to seek their re-

formation and restoration, so we urge that God will not merely proceed to condemn those whose misfortunes of condition and capacity lead them to wretchedness, but will devise some mode in his moral government whereby they may be restored, have opportunity of reformation, and eventually find their way to virtue and happiness.

Mr RUTHERFORD : My friend seems entirely to overlook the great question that I would have him to consider. Has man not sinned? Has he never done wrong? Has he not the consciousness of guilt? Can he either deny or always forget that he has violated the laws of his moral nature? Any remedial scheme that overlooks this unquestionable fact in human experience is wholly worthless, and thoroughly unphilosophical. No position can be supported by a clearer and larger induction of facts than the position that man is not what he ought to be. It is not enough that you come to a mind that is enlightened—to a conscience that is cleansed, and say, Do right, live nobly, act honourably and justly, fulfil your destiny, obey God, and seek the interests of your fellowmen. You need some message of forgiveness, that, like a ray from heaven, will chase away the deepening gloom of undeniable criminality. You need something that will lift the load of guilt from the spirit and restore it to moral buoyancy. It is vain that you tell men that if they mean well, and act well, they will deserve well; they have the consciousness that in many instances they have neither meant nor acted well, and that they only deserve condemnation. You need some doctrine that will meet the almost-universally felt wants of man's nature; and if you can only tell him now to do right, now to live purely, you do not meet those wants—you ignore them. The doctrine of justification by faith meets this great exigency —providing first for our deliverance from the consequences of sin, and then for our deliverance from sin itself.

The right of private judgment I do not question; but it is not a sufficient vindication of a man's opinion that he holds fast that which he thinks to be good, he must take advantage of every opportunity that he enjoys of ascertaining what is good; he is responsible for thinking rightly; he must prove all things, subjecting them to every proper test; he must not expect mathe-

matical demonstration where he can only have moral evidence; and he must come to the question with an unbiassed mind. There can be nothing revolting to the moral instincts of man in the condemnation of those who reject a scheme of mercy, supported by the highest evidence, and involving the authority of the great Lawgiver, as well as the interests of his subjects.

The question is asked, Why should God justify the ungodly? It is objected that such a course is neither moral nor useful. Now, the scriptural doctrine is, that God justifies the ungodly who submit to that righteous and honourable expedient in his moral government, on the ground of which he can forgive their past transgressions without dishonouring his law, without sacrificing the highest interests of other beings, and without sanctioning sin. It is the glory of the Divine method of mercy, that in blessing the transgressor with pardon, it brands the transgression with severest disapprobation. Till you can show us some better way of delivering man from the consequences of sin, we cannot admit that it is useless; and till you show us what righteous principle of government is violated, and what interests are sacrificed by the procedure, in view of its beneficent moral results in the experience of thousands, we repudiate the allegation that it is immoral. In believing in Christ, a man ceases to be ungodly; he is morally renovated; he receives the elements of a new and a noble character. When God justifies the ungodly, it is not that they may live in ungodliness, it is not that they may continue in sin, forgetful alike of the claims of their Creator, and the welfare of their fellow-beings: on the contrary, it is that they should live in holiness and righteousness during the remainder of their lives. He forgives in order that he may purify. He justifies in order that he may sanctify. He lifts the load of guilt from the soul that it may be restored to its moral elasticity, and that man may rise to the true dignity of his nature—that he may rise to a participation of the Divine image and of the Divine blessedness—that he may rise at last to all that moral and spiritual glory of character of which he is capable.

It is objected that one faith will not do for humanity; that it is impossible to teach all mankind one rule of belief; we must have a thousand different faiths to suit the almost endless diversity of human experience and understanding—one prescription of

faith, it is asserted, will not do for all the spiritual lazars of this world. But let me say that one prescription has done for men of every age, of every clime, of every tongue—for men of every diversity of capacity and condition. (Loud applause.) When has the gospel ever been received by men, and failed to heal their moral maladies? It has suited the savage in the desert, and the philosopher in the halls of learning—the cannibal in Polynesia, and the inhabitant of civilised lands; it has done for the inhabitants of Arctic regions, and for men living beneath the Torrid Zone—it has done for men of the first, and for men of the nineteenth century. It is the same vital, purifying, and ennobling thing now as at first—ever lifting God-ward, truth-ward, virtue-ward; and whatever my friend may think, we certainly need no other prescription. The gospel is still the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. There are thousands of persons of every age, and of almost every land, who have proved that it is no vain remedy—that it is adapted to man's universal need, providing for his deliverance from the future consequences of sin, and from its present power.

And let my friend understand that when I speak of the faith of the gospel, I do not mean something different from faith in Christ. I mean the belief of the truth as it is in Jesus—truth that certainly teaches its advocates to plead with men to abandon sin and be reconciled to God, but that claims attention only because it is supported by the clearest evidence. Christ did not go about requesting to be believed. To the Jews he appealed—'If I speak the truth, why do you not believe?' He called upon them to search the Scriptures and ascertain for themselves if he was not the Messiah that God had promised. He pointed to the mighty works which he openly did among them. My friend speaks as if Christianity came to us with importunity instead of evidence. The great leading fact of Christianity—the Resurrection of Jesus—was circulated while the then existing generation lived, and among a people capable of ascertaining the real facts of the case, and of exposing the imposture if there was any. Were it false it could not escape detection and reprobation. Were it a tissue of imposture, thousands were interested to put it down, and yet none arose during the apostolic age publicly to call in question the facts. In the Acts of the Apostles it is recorded

that, surrounded by assembled thousands from different parts of the world, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, stood up and confidently affirmed that the very Jesus whom the Jews had crucified had risen from the dead. It is further stated that three thousand persons were converted to Christianity as the result of the wonders which they saw, and his powerful appeal to the facts of which many of them had been witnesses, and which all could investigate. Was all this a fiction? Did these things never happen? If so, how shall we account for the fact that they gained credence among the people? Almost the whole people of Jerusalem were living witnesses of its falsehood. How is it that some of the infidels of those days—and there were infidels then as well as now—never arose to show that it was all a forgery and a deception? They did not, simply because they could not. If we can depend upon history at all, it is undeniably true that Peter did preach that sermon—that he openly stated on the day of Pentecost the fundamental fact that Christ had risen from the dead. Now, that was only forty days after the event itself had taken place. Could any man, in his circumstances, with the certainty of detection and of persecution, have stood up to make such statements if they were mere fabrications? And here we have the very man who had once proved cowardly, who had been false to the truth and to his Master, standing up among those who had crucified Christ, and announcing with the energy and earnestness of a man who was himself convinced, that the crucified Jesus had risen from the dead. There cannot be the shadow of a doubt that he believed what he declared to be a fact; and so far from his speech being a mere declamation, it was an elaborate argument.

The fact that the body of Jesus was not in the sepulchre on the morning of the third day, has never been called in question. Now this fact can be accounted for only on one or other of three suppositions:—either that the disciples took away the body, or that his enemies took it away, or that Jesus rose by the mighty power of God. That the disciples should remove the body is inconceivable, because, from their false ideas of the Messiah, they were not prepared to believe the fact that Jesus Christ had risen. When the fact was first announced to them they were full of doubts; and men who neither understood the words of prophecy,

nor gave credence to the fact when first announced to them, could never be supposed guilty of removing the body. And even if they had been anxious to do it they were not able. The Jews had induced the Roman governor to appoint a guard of soldiers to watch the tomb; a stone was rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre, and it was sealed. In such circumstances, was it at all likely that men who had manifested such timidity of spirit would make the attempt? and if they had, was there the slightest likelihood of their succeeding? For a Roman soldier to sleep at his post was death; and to have slept with such a doom hanging over them, and with the instructions they must have received, may be almost ranked among impossibilities. If they did not sleep, the body was not, as alleged, stolen away by the disciples; and if they did sleep they were not competent witnesses.

Nor can we conceive that the Jews took away the body. (A voice—Question, question.) Mr Rutherford : I think that is the question. Mr Holyoake tells us that we must not go up and down the world requesting to be believed, that we must say, 'Here is evidence, if you listen to it and weigh it without prejudice, you will believe;' he demands that we bring forward evidence to prove the truth of our religion, and that is what I am now doing. (Loud applause.) When I came here to-night I did not intend saying one word about the resurrection of Christ. I was perfectly willing to confine my attention to my friend's objections to Christianity as stated in his own letters, but when it is insinuated that we must adopt a supplicatory tone for lack of evidence, I am bound to state the evidence on which the fundamental fact of Christianity rests; and I would have Mr Holyoake to know that the doctrines of the New Testament rest upon facts as their foundation, and that its moral precepts draw some of their mightiest motives from its doctrines. I consider, therefore, that I am not wandering from the object of this discussion when I am bringing forward evidence to prove that Christianity is neither a dream, nor an imposture, that it is founded on undeniable facts, and that when we believe in it, we have evidence which satisfies our own minds that it is the truth of God, and which we are neither ashamed nor afraid to submit to the most searching examination. I was saying, when interrupted, that we cannot suppose that the Jews took away the body; they

would never think of thus playing into the hands of the disciples; they would never think of adopting a course which would establish Christianity, especially when they had taken every possible precaution to prevent it. Every motive of self-defence, and of self-interest would have led them to disclose and to prove the fact, if it had been so. But no thoughtful man can for a moment cherish the supposition; and we are forced to the only other that is left to us, that Christ rose from the grave on the morning of the third day, by the mighty power of God, and the great fact stands forth as an attestation of the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus, of the acceptableness of his work, and of the truth that though a man die he may live again. There cannot be a doubt that the disciples had evidence of the great fact which was satisfactory to their own minds. They were simple, unlettered, honest men, capable of bearing testimony to a fact, but not capable of concocting and giving currency to a plot of imposture and falsehood. Their lives furnish no ground for suspecting their integrity, and their readiness to endure all manner of obloquy and persecution, proves that they were truly sincere. They had long and familiar acquaintance with him previous to his death, and up to the time of his crucifixion. Subsequently to his resurrection they had the fullest opportunity of assuring themselves of his identity, and even the doubting Didymus, who said he would not believe unless he himself saw the prints of the nails, was fully convinced. The number of witnesses precluded the possibility of mistake. Thus, the fundamental fact of Christianity rests on an impregnable foundation.

We have heard the objections that Mr Holyoake has to urge against the doctrine of justification by faith. He wishes it removed entirely, and would have it superseded as speedily as possible by justification by conduct. But he overlooks the fact that it is because in the righteous government of God we cannot have the latter, that we need the former. Will he tell us how man is to be forgiven on his theory? Will he tell us how the oppressive dread of future retribution for the actions and principles of our past lives is to be removed; how we are to know that we shall be accepted, and that we shall hereafter be delivered from even the natural and necessary consequences of sin? He asks if he will suffer for conscientious dissent. In reply, I will take the illus-

tration which he himself has given. If he is diseased, if he is dying of cholera, and there is a remedy provided for that, if the remedy is exactly adapted to remove the disease, and would remove it at once on being taken,—if I bring that to him, and ask him to take it, and urge all the reasons why he should at once receive it, but if he conscientiously dissents from me, and rejects that remedy—the only remedy that there is—will he be saved from the consequences of that rejection, because his dissent is conscientious? (Applause.) If the great Governor of the universe has provided one ground, and only one ground, on which, in accordance with the laws of man's spiritual nature, and the laws of the moral universe, he can forgive men, and if you wilfully, deliberately, or even conscientiously reject that only ground of acceptance and forgiveness, can you avoid the consequences? Mr Holyoake may seek to excite men's feelings by talking about everlasting damnation, about special, superadded, eternal destruction with fire and brimstone; but he should remember that, couched in the language of the New Testament, which no right canon of interpretation requires us invariably to interpret in strict literalness, are representations of future suffering which clearly indicate that one of its bitterest ingredients will be that it was self-chosen and might have been avoided. To make it fearful, there is no need of physical anguish, the mind may become its own tormentor. Conscience and memory often make fearful havoc of human happiness. Remorse sometimes begins on earth where the conscience is but imperfectly enlightened and awakened; that feeling may strengthen as the mind expands. As a man attains a clearer perception of his relationship to his Creator and to his fellow-beings—as his memory more vividly presents his past transgressions, while his heart is still selfish and sin-loving, he will feel that he needs nothing more to kindle a hell within him. The remedy is not to be blamed for the effects of the terrible disease it was provided to cure. And the gospel cannot be condemned for consequences which it is designed to remove. That God should manifest his displeasure toward men who, in addition to all their other sins, despise his gracious plan, is no injustice. Mr Holyoake admits—he cannot deny it—that we may carry with us into the future our mental constitution, our character, and the principles of our conduct here, that we

may find in the future the development of the present, that we may reap in eternity what we have sown in time. Now, can he show me a way in which I can be saved from reaping the fearful consequences of my sin upon his own ground, supposing that the righteous Governor of the universe passes no condemnation, and manifests no special displeasure? Can he show me a way of deliverance from the bitter fruits of sin in the eternal future, other than that which is provided in the theory of the gospel?

Mr Holyoake endeavoured to show that there is a discrepancy between Paul and James. I did think that the remarks I made in reference to the three classes of passages in the New Testament, which refer to the great subject of justification, would have entirely obviated the objection; and it appears to me that it is because our friend has not duly considered the relation of these three classes of passages to each other that he does not see that in truth there is no contradiction whatever. Paul says the ungodly are justified by faith in Christ. Now, take an illustration: There is a man who has been living in sin. He has been a drunkard, and is sunk in degradation of soul. He has a memory and cannot forget what he has been. He sees his influence, like a lava-stream, scathing and blighting others. He needs forgiveness; and if you bring any doctrine to him that does not speak pardon to his inmost soul, even though it may deliver him partially from his degrading position, it does not and cannot by any possibility fully meet his case. The Bible-truth, however, fully meets it; pardon comes to him as a free gift, and in a way that offers no premium to his sin; the fetters that bound his spirit are at once broken; he is assured of justification through the atoning sacrifice of Christ; and is then left with a glad heart and free to go onward working for God and for humanity. Christ said to the woman who was taken in the very act of sin—'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.' He proclaimed pardon that purity might follow. He sought to chase away despair that she might be led to duty. When a man is justified freely through Christ, the ideas under which he is put, present the loftiest conceivable obstacles to his continuance in sin. He is forgiven by God, and how shall he insult his benefactor and abuse his mercy? He is forgiven that he may go and sin no more, and how shall he overlook and frustrate the great object of

his deliverance from condemnation? Infinite love is manifested in his forgiveness, and how shall he pierce the heart that has yearned over him? He is forgiven through the great self-sacrifice of the Divine Redeemer, and how shall he by continued sin trample it under his feet? And forgiveness in itself in delivering the conscience from the oppressive burden of guilt, leaves the mind free for duty and service. Where, then, is the tendency in this doctrine to immorality?

It is objected to the doctrine of justification by faith that it is arbitrary, making salvation depend upon opinion. Now, the objection is founded on a mistake. Faith is never represented in the New Testament as the ground or cause of our justification; it is merely the condition, the means. We rejoice to acknowledge the unmeritoriousness of faith, and frankly admit that it could never, in the righteous government of God, be the ultimate reason of human forgiveness.

Men may take merit to themselves for charity, temperance, forbearance, zeal, earnestness, prayerfulness; for their faithfulness as husbands, their kindness as parents, their uprightness as neighbours, or their patriotism as citizens; but it is not likely that they will take credit to themselves for believing a credible report. The Scriptures do not represent men as saved for believing, but in believing. The efficiency does not lie in the act of the mind, but in the object on which it rests; just as the power in the electric telegraph is not in the wires but in the battery; the wires only convey the stream of electricity to the distant pointers. So faith in the gospel is saving, because the truth which it admits into the mind is saving truth, bringing man into a position in which God can, consistently with the claims of his law and government, receive him, and in which he will become matured for everlasting fellowship with the perfectly holy beings of another world. If a man is sinking into a watery grave, and I throw out a rope to him, though his laying hold of it is necessary to his deliverance, it is the rope that saves him. You never think of saying that you are strengthened for eating your dinner, though you are strengthened by eating it. A boy had fallen from the top of a house where he had been working; in falling he laid hold of a rope that had been attached to a ladder; he could not cling to it long, and if he fell on the ground he would be dashed in

pieces; a strong man saw his danger, ran to his rescue, urged him to let himself fall, promising to receive him in his arms. The boy believed, let go his hold, and was saved—not for his believing, but in believing. Or suppose one of you is invited into the presence of the Queen of England, but you cannot be admitted without a court dress. One is provided for you; I come to announce to you the fact, but you will not believe it, therefore you are not presented at court. Suppose, however, that you believe it, you put it on, and are admitted; you do not attribute your being received to the act of putting it on, but to the dress. Or, to take one more illustration. You are dying; you need medicine; here is medicine; you take it and you are healed; but the taking of the medicine is not the cause of your convalescence—you attribute your restoration to the medicine itself. It is the medicine that heals, and it is the truth on which the mind reposes in believing, that saves—it is the truth, I repeat, that saves. Faith is necessary as being the only means by which a man can be brought into harmony with that wondrous plan in Divine moral government which secures his justification. Originating in infinite benevolence, and accomplished by an act of unparalleled self-denial, that plan is promulgated as the honourable ground on which the Governor of the universe can meet his rebellious subjects, and proclaim to them a perfect amnesty: and faith in it is submission to it; the rejection of it is rebellion. The object on which faith rests is the Divine testimony. The remedial scheme is a great moral expedient introduced into the Divine government, consisting of the obedience to the death of Christ as a supernatural interposition above law, but harmonious with it, to save men from the consequences of sin, and from sin itself, but requiring faith in it to secure its legal and moral effects in the experience of man. It is this work which is the ground of his justification.

We know of nothing that can thoroughly transform a sinful and selfish human heart, but the manifestation of God's hatred to our sins and his love to our souls furnished in the work and sufferings of Jesus, and there is no conceiveable way in which that manifestation can get access to our souls to transform them, so as to secure our highest happiness and virtue, except faith in the divine testimony. Wrong thoughts of God's moral character

are at the root of all the sin that exists in the world. Man generally thinks of God as his enemy on account of sin. He does not realise God's perfect, disinterested, boundless love, even in the midst of the severest condemnation of his transgression. And it is the belief in divine love—it is the realisation of God's infinite kindness and condescension interposing to save—that turns a man's heart entirely from sin. I do not mean to say that those who call themselves Secularists may not act uprightly as men towards their fellowmen. I do not say that they cannot be good citizens and good neighbours, but I do mean to say, that they have nothing to meet the felt want of humanity—the necessity for pardon for past transgression. I know not Mr Holyoake's heart; I know not the hearts of any of his friends, but I know a little of my own; and I know that I need forgiveness;—I know that I have not lived in perfect harmony throughout with the laws of my moral nature, and I can conceive of sin committed in past years as living still, and producing impressions that I can never obliterate, and I feel I need the assurance of forgiveness, of deliverance from the condemnation that I deserve. Does not man's unbiassed conscience, when it speaks out, testify that forgiveness is needed; and we see not how it can be enjoyed except in the way that is announced in the New Testament.

We have seen that the doctrine is not arbitrary; and I now remark that it seems most important that in receiving so great a blessing as salvation, we should know our benefactor, and the cost at which we receive such a boon. If any great temporal benefit comes to me, I am anxious to know from whom it has come. Selfish and sordid is the nature that is not concerned to know the donor. In the knowledge of that, I have a far higher gratification than in the mere enjoyment of the gift. The boon itself may perish, or in the maturity of my manhood may appear but as a toy of youth, but the generosity, the kindness that gave it, will ever live in my memory, and move my heart to deepest gratitude. And in the removal of the consequences of my transgression, in the free and full forgiveness of my sin, in the restored elasticity of my spiritual nature, in the restoration of my soul to peace, and in the harmonising of my moral powers, I must enquire to whom I owe this great salvation. You may tell me to enjoy the blessings themselves, without asking for

the donor, as some tell me not to enquire who it is that pours upon me the light of the glorious sun, who it is that spreads around me a universe so radiant with beauty, who it is that has given me those faculties which enable me to appreciate the beautiful and sublime, who it is that has given me capacities for enjoying fellowship with the Infinite and All-perfect; but *I should blush for my humanity*, if such meddling hindered me from seeking to know my benefactor, and when I find him at the cross, exclaiming, 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.' (Loud applause.)

Mr HOLYOAKE:—In these controversies it usually happens that a minister will say certain things, and upon these I habitually calculate. Although it has been conceded by Christian ministers that it is a fair thing to try Christianity by moral tests, yet it takes a long time before we get the perfection of practice even on the part of those who are the most ready to concede the propriety of that course. But though this debate, like many others, may not have the effect of settling the questions under discussion, I trust it will answer another important end—that of opening some understandings to the consideration of new truths. I quite agree with Mr Rutherford in his representation that the doctrine which he advocates professes to be founded on facts either real or assumed, but he overlooks, and persons do continually overlook, that this has nothing to do with the consideration of Christianity on the moral ground—that the doctrine, though built on facts, may be built on two kinds of fact, the relevant and the irrelevant, the historical and moral. Historical facts are not germane to this question—we have only to look to *moral* facts; hence, the disquisition on the resurrection of Christ would have been an admirable address to a person who disbelieves that doctrine, or calls that fact in question, which I do not here. I simply say it does not matter to me whether Christ rose or not; it may be a matter of solemn inquiry elsewhere whether Christ lived and re-lived; but the question now is, Are the moral precepts which he laid down true and wise? If they are, they require not the attestation of miracles to recommend them. Professor Newman says, 'Nothing can assure me of the humanity or veracity of God unless my

conscience assures me both of his veracity and humanity,' and no miracle or prophecy can effect that. When it is argued that a book is true, or that the Word of God is true, because some miracle has been performed, or from the fact of Christ rising, one is disposed to say, that you might as well argue that a man is honest because he is ten feet high. Miraculous height does not give integrity, nor does any miracle of power, like rising from the dead, attest any miracle whatever in moral truth. Christ may have risen from the dead, and yet his moral precepts be neither good nor wise. So we say, if you show us that justification by faith is a moral, useful thing for mankind, we will adopt it, without regard to miracle or prophecy; but when you tell us that it is by belief and not by good works that we are to be saved, you put good works second and faith first, and we account that immorality. Show us that a doctrine is moral and we will believe it, whether Christ rose from the dead or not. You give me the golden rule; I believe in its propriety without miracle or prophecy. I care nothing here for inspiration or the testimony of the Fathers. I believe the precept for its own sake, and if untrue I would not accept it though all the miracles in the world had been wrought in its favour. Christians believe in the Bible because of miracles and prophecy, whereas I believe in the true portions of it without either. If you say that you would believe it without miracles or prophecy, why do you press these into the argument? My friend tells us that a physician gives a recipe to a patient, and admonishes him that he will die if he fails to follow it. Very true, but he does not say the patient will be damned also as well as die, and that is the difference between the 'physician of souls' and a physician of the body. The latter tells you, honestly and usefully, that you will die unless you follow his recipe; the former, that you will not only die, but be damned as well—be cast into outer darkness, and suffer unutterable anguish! Now, it is to this additional penalty that we object. We do not complain of the consequences of refusing the prescription, provided these are the 'natural' results of walking by another light; but when you *superadd* another condemnation, then we say you outrage reason, and, as I think, also morality. Mr Rutherford observed very emphatically, but without seeing the force of what he was

saying, that a man will not be saved for believing; then I say, we ought not to be damned for not believing. When you carry away salvation to any other power (or work) than that of faith, you justify us in saying, that if your salvation does not rest in faith, then *we* may be saved who have not your faith. But we were admonished that man has sinned, and I was asked, what do I say to that fact—do I deny or admit it? I say, unquestionably, that man has sinned; but without stopping to enquire or determine whether the sin has been committed against ourselves or God, I say that no sin which man has committed can justify the infliction of special, everlasting punishment—and this punishment is the doctrine of the Scriptures. What do you say to the man who has sinned? That if he believes he shall be justified. We say to the man who has sinned, let him make the best compensation he is able, and find in that a consolation for what evil he has done. You want to know how a man can be justified to his own conscience. How can, or ought he to seek consolation, except by compensation? Why, you prescribe that yourselves, when you require and expect compunction before the consequences of retribution can be withdrawn. You quote the Saviour, who said to the woman, 'Neither do I condemn thee—go and sin no more:' and that is precisely the doctrine which we say ought to obtain. Will not the Saviour in heaven save as he did on earth; and as we are willing to sin no more, have we not a claim to be forgiven for any offence we may have committed?

I marked a point to which I must now direct your attention. My friend said, had not man a sense of remorse and an apprehension of retribution? But he (Mr R.) overlooked the fact that he first makes the conscience by his own creed, and then adapts his creed to the conscience he has created. He has urged that the offences of this life must awaken remorse, having in view future retribution. I say he himself would not venture to inflict eternal retribution on erring man for sin committed, and if he states that God has prepared this retribution for the sinner, he says that God has done that from which he would shrink himself. No man would provide eternal retribution for his fellow-man; he would rather utter the words of forgiveness, and put him in the path of reformation and eternal happiness. In my mind, therefore, there

is no apprehension of eternal retribution, for I do not believe that God will inflict on his creatures that which no man would dare to inflict on his fellows. Therefore remorse does not point to eternal retribution. But when my friend says, that we must provide for remorse, he also overlooks that I am not, to-night, pleading for the justification of felons, but for honest men. Here is a number of conscientious disbelievers, who mean well and act honestly—how can a sense of 'remorse' attach to conscientious disbelief, and why should not we be justified in the sight of God when our only offence is, that we maintain opinions which appear to us to be honest and true? Mr Rutherford has spoken of the dress in which a person appears at court, and has said that the qualification is in the suitability of the individual to be admitted there. Now if I go to the court of heaven in the dress of good conduct, why should I not be admitted to the marriage feast as well as you who go in a dress of true faith? Mr Rutherford lays it down, in one of his letters to me, that 'the justification of a man in the sight of God is in the faith which saves from selfishness and sin;' but if my opinions save me from selfishness and sin, why should I not be justified whether I believe in your gospel or not? I speak not of the animal, who may have a sense of remorse for the crimes he has committed, but of the man who claims to be considered honest and sincere, and who means to act virtuously; and I wish to know why *he* should need your faith in order to stand accepted in the sight of God. Must it not be far more grateful in the eyes of a moral God (and you will not deny the morality of the God whom you worship and adore) to see his creatures labouring to accomplish good works useful to mankind, to dry up the tear of sorrow, to bring consolation to the broken-hearted, to promote public liberty, than to know that they believe as Wesley, Calvin, Luther, or some other dead saint, happened to believe? A man's creed can be nothing in the eyes of God compared with the integrity of his intentions and the earnestness of his endeavours after moral improvement. On this ground no man who labours to be virtuous ought to stand in dread of Christian condemnation, and live under the horrible idea that God will punish him because he does not believe what other persons believe. He may be far from being perfect or infallible, but doing, in honesty and

sincerity, the best that he is able, his services will be accepted. As Schlegel says, in his hymn to Fame:—

> 'What shall I do to gain eternal life?
> Discharge aright
> The simple dues with which each day is rife;
> Yea, with thy might.
> Ere perfect scheme of action thou devise
> Will life be fled,
> While, he who ever acts as conscience cries
> Shall live though dead.'

Mr RUTHERFORD:—I think that our friend has entirely failed to show how a man who has sinned, and who knows that he has sinned, can be delivered from its consequences. His gospel, he assures us, will do for the honest and the pure and the good; but he has no gospel for the selfish, the depraved, and the degraded. In describing God's treatment of man in the future life, in reference to punishment and suffering, he entirely overlooks what God has done for man to save him from that suffering, and from the eternal issues of his own conduct. A remedy has been provided, it is adapted to man's case, it is all that he needs, and if he goes into the future world to reap the consequences of his sin, with the deepening conviction that he is self-ruined, and with a conscience that testifies of guilt, is God blameworthy? Is God to be condemned because he leaves man to reap those fruits? I fear, however, that our friend has not brought out clearly and fully his real position. If I am not mistaken, after a careful study of his writings, he holds not a justification by works so much as a justification by organisation—a doctrine which I hold to be most immoral in its tendency and most blighting in its results. I do not speak without the book; I do not stand here to address you without careful thought, and I do not say what I am not prepared to prove; and if our friend does not now believe what he did, or if I misunderstand him, he will correct me. To me it appears, that the Secularist doctrine is justification by organisation—a doctrine which would obliterate all distinction between virtue and vice—which would make Manning as virtuous as Wilberforce, Rush as Howard, the most devoted philanthropist as little worthy of praise as the most abandoned sensualist, and the most ferocious tyrant that ever lived, as little worthy of blame as the man

who has advocated the people's rights, and consecrated all his energies to their welfare.

It was not without reason that, in my first speech, I drew attention to the consciousness of responsibility as a refutation of the dogma that man is the creature of circumstances, to conscience as evidence of a higher and holier judge of human character, and to remorse, as a phenomenon of our moral nature, which is at once a proof of the existence of moral evil, and a premonition of future judgment. It was not without reason that I pressed the inquiry whether the Secularist objection to justification by faith does not rest upon the supposition that man is responsible neither for faith, nor character, nor conduct. The whole controversy hinges upon this question. Grant that man is responsible. To whom is he responsible? No one can feel it satisfactory to answer—To his fellowmen. Unable to take cognisance of his inmost thoughts, of his hidden motives, which give moral hue to his conduct, they cannot judge righteous judgment. He is responsible to a higher tribunal than man's. His Creator must judge whether he has answered the end of his being. He is placed under moral law. That law justly demands perfect obedience. It has been violated by man, and once violated, it can only condemn. If the criminal is saved from the consequences, it must be by the intervention of the Moral Governor himself, in a way consistent with the highest interests of the universe. The promulgation of that way demands a supernatural revelation. When that revelation is given, and attested by moral evidence sufficient to convince every thoughtful and honest mind, its rejection is not only the necessary forfeiture of forgiveness in the only way in which (so far as we know) it is possible under a righteous moral administration, but is high treason against the holy Governor himself, as it involves contempt equally of his authority, of his jurisdiction, and of his mercy. Admitting, then, the great facts of man's accountability, and of his sin, the only justification which seems possible is a justification by faith—by submission to the legal ground of his acceptance, which results in moral harmony with the broken law. Immorality of tendency is not chargeable upon the doctrine which recognises man's responsibility, but upon that which denies or ignores it. I might appeal to the general experience of

all true Christians, and enquire whether the enjoyment of forgiveness leads them to continue in sin, whether it deadens their interest in the temporal and spiritual welfare of their fellowmen, whether it makes them worse husbands, fathers, friends, and citizens. I might appeal to individual cases in past history, in which the reception of pardon on such grounds has produced the most wonderful change in character and life. I might appeal to the manifest effects of the gospel under our own eye. How often have we seen the heart that was once ice-cold towards the interests of others, pour out streams of pure benevolence, the lips that have uttered blasphemy have praised God, the tongue that reviled has blessed, the feet that were swift to evil have run in the path of God's commandments, the drunkard has become sober, the impure chaste, the churl bountiful, the idle active. The whole soul is stirred to its utmost depths, and a new creature is the effect—not a creature so unearthly that he is not fit to work and worship in this every-day world, but a man who is prepared for life's battle, who feels that he has a work to do for man, and that God not only calls him to it, but will help him in it,—a man whose trials will not break his spirit, but nerve it to heroic endurance; whose life will be a psalm of goodness, because a psalm of thanksgiving to God.

When we see the principles of Secularism producing such results it will deserve to share our regards with the religion of Christ; but while it holds the doctrine of justification by organisation and circumstances, its moral influence must not only be worthless, but pernicious. I am concerned to show, by some proofs, that this is the dogma which it would substitute for the Christian doctrine; and if it is established that irresponsibility is 'the leading fact on which it is founded,' we shall be able to form some estimate of its moral value. In every instance I shall quote Mr Holyoake's own words. Listen to this: 'If man errs, the bitter consequences are ever with him. Why should he err? Does he choose the ignorance, incapacity, passion, and blindness, through which he errs? Why is he precipitated, imperfectly natured, into a chaos of crime? Is not his destiny made for him, and shall God punish that sin which is his misfortune rather than his fault?' 'To me, free-will seems the synonym of chaos in nature, of disorder in ethics, of confusion in life.' 'The dogma

of free-will is a fatal error, religiously, socially, educationally.' 'An iron necessity overrules human destiny and limits the responsibility of man to his fellowman. He stands exonerated in the eyes of a just God.' 'All moral action is generated by constitution and condition. Opinions result from evidence, and actions result from the stimulus of circumstances on organisation: and as man cannot change evidence, he submits to it, and he finds himself in the right without desert of his own, or in the wrong without fault on his part—and as man neither made his nature nor his condition, he owes his actions to the destiny of his organisation and position.' 'Since we are made to be what we are by that inevitable necessity, whose currents set in before we began to exist, and which bear us along to our destiny, I argue that we cannot be accountable for our fate to Him from whose hands we are assured the issues of life proceeded.' In reference to Mrs Manning, he says, 'No amount of preceptive teaching would prevent a strong and vicious nature like that of Mrs Manning's from falling before the temptation of vicious circumstances. Such organisations are only to be saved from crime by being judiciously trained and innoxiously placed.'

Here is non-accountability—non-responsibility—justification by organisation. If this be true it is needless to attempt drawing lines of distinction between virtue and vice; if the gospel that our friend has for the working classes, and for man in general is, that a man can be justified by his organisation, and that organisation and the circumstances in which he is placed necessitate conduct, then farewell to virtue—farewell to progress, improvement, and the development of the human mind. We would then need no justification such as that described in the New Testament, but if that be the doctrine, then mark you, it is not that my friend objects to justification by faith so much—not that he holds justification by works, but that a man's circumstances justify him for his conduct, whatever it may be. The gospel tells a very different tale—it tells man (what he knows, what he must feel) that he has sinned. Our friend has acknowledged this, but under what limitations I am not aware. Well, then, having sinned he needs forgiveness; if he has sinned, he must be free to sin, and his organisation and circumstances are not to blame. He is to blame, for we attach blame to sin, and I suppose my friend

must; if he does not, then, when he says man has sinned, he does not mean sin as we understand it. If his position be correct in those passages which teach that a man's circumstances make the difference, then all men are equal in moral judgment—no one can be blamed, no punishment can be demanded either by our fellowmen or by God; in these circumstances, morality is impossible, and the objection to justification by faith does not rest in its not requiring works; for the secularist, on the principles which he advocates, requires nothing but organisation to justify all crimes, and to make all men alike in a moral point of view—the bad equally with the good, and the good on the same level as the bad. Is this the doctrine which is to elevate man? Is this the teaching that is to purify the springs of human conduct? Do we teach anything that will lead men to sin? Does Christianity teach anything that will encourage man in immorality? Does it not teach man his duty to God (which my friend seems to overlook, for if I have duties to my fellow-men, have I not also duties towards God)—have I no reason for loving him, the All-perfect, the All-wise, the Infinitely-benevolent? Have I no reason for gratitude to Him who has placed me in this beautiful universe, who has given me powers for comprehending truth and enjoying himself? And when Christianity comes to me and tells me that God has not only provided the blessings of this life for me but an immortality of glory—that he would have me enjoy it—that there is a righteous way in which I can be accepted, I find in this gospel that which elevates my whole moral nature. It does not smile on sin. In forgiving my transgressions, God brands them with his displeasure; he condemns the sin, but acquits the sinner—he pardons in order that I may be renovated. Mr Holyoake has failed fairly to give the meaning of Christ's words to the woman taken in sin: it was not, Neither do I condemn thee, provided thou sin no more. He did not make any condition in the forgiveness. 'Neither do I condemn thee,' were his words; and if a connecting word has to be supplied, it would be, *therefore*, 'go and sin no more.' When I am forgiven, I see the evil of my sin. God does not teach me that I am the creature of circumstances and could not avoid it; he does not palliate or smile upon it—it is thoroughly condemned, while I am saved from it in order that my joyous, freed, forgiven spirit may go out to delight in him, to do his will and pleasure, and to be of service to my fellow-beings. The gospel thus meets the entire

wants of humanity—first providing the means for my entire deliverance from the consequences of guilt, and then for my full emancipation from the power of sin itself, from all selfishness and impurity. It raises man from the dust, gives him an object in which his affections may centre, and the worship and contemplation of the All-perfect improves and elevates his whole moral nature.

The Chairman thanked the meeting for the calm and patient manner in which they had listened to the arguments on both sides, and invited them to attend on the following evening.

SECOND NIGHT'S DEBATE.

SUBJECT.—'*Are the Teachings of Jesus Christ favourable to Human Welfare and Progress?*'

The CHAIRMAN said,—The popular form of election has been dispensed with; but I may say, for the satisfaction of the audience, that it is at the request of the gentlemen representing each party I take the chair, so that there can be no favouritism or party feeling about the choice. In occupying the chair, I know the duties will be exceedingly light, and I doubt not, very agreeable. If the audience again manifest the same good behaviour which they did on Monday evening, it will reflect great credit on themselves, for I must say I never attended a meeting of the kind where such good behaviour was manifested on both sides of the question—it was a credit to the town, and as a gentleman said to me, he thought there was an improved feeling with respect to these matters, for each could sit and calmly hear things which were not agreeable to them, and yet have the good sense to leave the speakers to deal with these matters, which they could do much better than by the audience interfering. The chairman then announced the subject of discussion, which was, 'Are the Teachings of Jesus Christ favourable to Human Welfare and Progress?' and called upon the first speaker.

Mr HOLYOAKE:—The meeting on Monday evening must have been struck with the modesty and good taste with which Mr Rutherford apologised for other ministers of Newcastle who avoid debates of this kind. I am sure we shall esteem Mr Rutherford for his manliness in meeting us in this way to justify his dissent from

our opinions, while your other ministers, who should do battle for Zion, act the part of timid militia-men, and shut themselves up in their sentry-boxes till the enemy breaks in upon the camp—whereas Mr Rutherford, as it seems to me, more like a true soldier of the Cross, raises the standard for his Master alone. I think that such an act entitles him to our recognition, because, if discussion is a good thing—and your presence here testifies that you regard it as a useful thing—it is honourable on the part of those who afford it. I shall therefore pause for a moment to explain to him the misapprehension of my views into which he fell in his closing speech on the last evening. You remember that he rather nakedly alluded to what he called a doctrine of justification by organisation. That doctrine would be more properly described as justification by Susceptibility, Capacity, and Opportunity—for the quality and degree of the susceptibility which we inherit, the measure of the capacity with which we are endowed, and the partial opportunities of a man's life, must be extenuating circumstances in the eyes of that Maker who moulded us like the potter's clay, and sent us frail and finite into this world—a world rife with infinite and powerful temptations. A good God will no doubt perceive these truths in the hour of his judgment, and award to his erring creatures new strength, new instruction, and a purer sphere—and instead of condemning them to eternal perdition, will open the gates of a fairer world and a nobler fate. And man who is just, no less than God, also recognises the extenuating effects of constitution and circumstances in his human judgment—the impulse of anger is arrested, the voice of passion is hushed, personal hate is rebuked, and the dreadful and discreditable sentiment of Retribution is abashed—and the sigh of pity escapes him—and the good man strives to Instruct, and hopes to Reform. There is, to my seeming, a solemn truth little understood by Christians, expressed in those great words, Organisation and Condition—a truth which reverberates from the court, of man to the throne of any just God, making itself felt in the words of humanity on earth, and distilling in golden words of kindness in the courts of heaven.

But Mr Rutherford asked, How can I, a believer in causation, propose to reward conduct hereafter? I do not—I say that good conduct is its own reward, and bad conduct its own punishment, in the 'natural order of things'—but since Christians hold that

man is responsible to God, we have a right to remind you that society is not made up of *judgment* alone—it has another province, that of *Instruction*. The science of society is to produce good conduct. How will you do this best? By attaching God's sanction to faith or to conduct? The question is the narrow but severe one of a comparison of means for the production of virtue. Justification by faith we would supersede by the doctrine of *acceptability by conduct*. That includes the good men of all creeds. It is a doctrine popular as well as useful. My neighbour can judge of my conduct—only the priest can judge of my faith. It is a doctrine broad as well as sound. *Faith* gives you but one means of being virtuous—*Conduct* gives you a hundred. Christians, therefore, who are the friends of morality, are bound to prefer a doctrine which will place justification by faith in good works higher than justification by faith in the gospel. We hold that men are influenced by circumstances—and since we see that, in a Christian's estimation, the approbation of God is a great circumstance, we wish your ministers to attach that approbation to conduct instead of to faith, and then that great circumstance will be upon the side of manifold good works, instead, as now, on the side of special sound believing.

All wide debates weary without instructing the public—I therefore narrow my objections to the facts of Christianity to *one*. It is a fact *in* Christianity that men are taught that they will be justified by faith in Christ. I object to this one fact, and put instead, that of justification by faith in humanity, so that when I am called upon to say how I would save a man who has sinned, it will be found that the argument is narrowed to one kind of sin, that of not believing in Christ. And here I will say that that disbelief, being honest, is not a sin, and unless Mr Rutherford is prepared to say that my conscientious dissent from the Bible is a crime, he has no right whatever to preach perdition against me for my disbelief; and if Christianity does affirm that conscientious dissent is guilt its doctrine is immoral, and gives encouragement to hypocrisy.

I have now to justify the proposition, namely, that some of Christ's precepts are ambiguous and some impracticable. You will, I doubt not, extend to me the privilege of the Unitarians, who have won this for themselves by their brave and admirable

reasoning, and their patient perseverance in the pursuit of truth —I mean, the privilege of considering Christ as a human being. It is the custom of these days to speak perpetually of the morality and example of Christ as being absolutely necessary for our guidance, and Christ himself as a model of perfection. Now, if it should happen that the standard thus set up is above the average intelligence of the age and the opportunity of this generation, then people may rise by studying it; but by making it the supreme model you depress all those who are capable of rising above it—it is therefore competent for us to point out the grounds on which we think objections rest against many of the precepts of Christ. I take the privilege of considering Christ, at this moment, as I would Socrates or any heathen moralist. If you permit this you will not be pained by any freedom of remark in which I may be obliged to indulge, but will rather understand that I am simply accepting you on your own ground—judging of Christ's sayings in one place by what he said in another, and seeking to make a scriptural eclecticism, ascertaining what is good and what bad, and cleaving to that which we find to be useful. I am going first to refer to the 5th of Matthew, because the Sermon on the Mount is very celebrated, and supposed by Christians generally to be incomparable in its expression of moral truth. Now the morality of the New Testament has not all the qualities necessary for these times. Its morality is, I grant you, in some respects excellent. The sayings of Christ had in them, in some instances, a noble aspiration; some of them are beautiful and lofty, and such as it might be difficult to surpass—such as we may contemplate with the highest satisfaction, and improve ourselves very much in endeavouring to realise them. That is the character of many of his precepts, and if we were to judge of him as an illustrious teacher of the Jewish nation, and compare him with many of his time and generation, I should be disposed to award him a very high place; but when you say, here is the perfection of morality, here is everything that we can require, that his words are not to be improved, that it is criminal not to understand his language in a given sense, that we are in danger of eternal perdition unless we believe the whole he has said—when you utter these broad and serious attestations of the infallibility of his sayings, we have a

right to ask whether that morality answers all the requirements and has all the marks about it of the morality necessary for our conduct in these days. A moral precept requires four things to make it perfect, namely, Aspiration, Explanation, Demonstration, and Development. The aspiration must be nobler and higher than average sentiment, or it is not worthy the dignity of a moral precept; it must be accompanied by a clear statement, it must be in itself explicit—it ought to be expressed, as we are told by those who teach us rhetoric, not only so that it can be understood, but so that it cannot by possibility be misunderstood. Then we want not only the maxim we ought to follow, but the reasons *why* we should follow it; and next the development — *how* it is to be reduced to practice. Now a hundred people will tell you what to do, for one who will tell you *why* you should do it; and a hundred will tell you why you should do a thing, for one who will tell you *how* it should he done, and this is why you have had such a poor harvest of moral conduct. Christian ministers have been preaching from their pulpits some noble sentiments for nearly two thousand years; they have told the people what to do, but they have not given them universal reasons why they should do it; and if they succeeded in impressing on the conscience the authority of Heaven for realising the precepts, they wanted the far-reaching powers of observation and induction to teach people how the precepts were to be reduced to practice. Even the word Charity, on which Paul descants so eloquently, is left in a declamatory mist. If any man would tell us in what charity consists—would give us a definition which the public could understand, and statesmen might reduce to practice, why parliaments and kingdoms would stand still to hear him, for philosophers and philanthropists have been labouring for centuries to arrive at something like a standard definition of what charity really consists in. This shows that morality was not invented in Judea, was not born with Christ, was not developed but only indifferently stated by him—shows that it is the growth of time and the triumph of civilization. Although we find aspirations after morality in the New Testament, we hardly ever have the reason why the precepts there given should be reduced to practice, and never the mode by which this should be accomplished. I do

not find fault with Christ, judged by the Jewish standard of his own times. If you say he was a great teacher, but fallible like others, then I am content; but when you say he spoke as never man spoke, that morality began with him and ended with him, that no addition can be made thereto, and that any man who presumes to do so endangers his own soul—when you deny me the right of judging eclectically of the Scriptures, then I demand proof that these precepts are not only full of noble aspirations, but intelligible—that they carry demonstration why they should be followed, and give practical directions as to how they can be carried out.

In the chapter to which I have referred, we read this phrase: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' Now, what is meant here by the meek, for it so happens that in the popular sense of the term the meek never did inherit the earth, and are not likely to do it, and ought not to want to do it. Then we are told—'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' Now, I should rather say, that the merciful are blessed whether they obtain mercy or not, for mercy is ever its own blessing; so that when a reason is given, it is seldom the best that can be given. Again, it is said, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' I take this to be a misleading passage, because no man is blessed when he is persecuted, and never was yet in this world's history; it was always a calamity and a misfortune—a misfortune to the man himself, a misfortune to those who inflict it upon him, and to the cause which he laboured to promote. To rejoice at it in prospect of the reward in heaven may be agreeable to the selfish feeling, but the true propagandist dreads the gratification purchased at the expense of any error of advocacy, the failure of truth, and the awakening of the malignity of mankind. The aspiration here may be lofty, but the logic in support thereof is faulty, and open to serious objection; and I believe innumerable good and patriotic causes have been brought into contempt by following this unfortunate precept, sanctioned by Christ, that it is good to be persecuted. Everywhere the popular advocacy has been brought into contempt by well-meaning persons who have been misled by

dangerous sentiments like these. Another passage which I call ambiguous is of this nature: 'Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now, I like this sentiment, because my righteousness (I hope I may say so without presumption or egotism) does exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, I am therefore entitled, upon this saying, to go to heaven; and the saying is generous also, because it states that even if a man shall break the commandments, and shall teach others do do so, yet that he is safe—he shall go to heaven, although he shall not be called great there. My friend will be obliged to say that this passage is not complete; he will have to come to its help, and I ask you to note how he does it, for I undertake to say he will be compelled to take the same license which I claim for myself, and for doing which, he preaches perdition against me. That will be the issue of every explanation we shall have to-night.

Again, there are certain statements which I account impracticable. I will take the passages which you will find in the 6th Matthew, the 24th to 34th verses, where much is told us as to the recklessness with which we may live: 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they?' If you turn from this revelation to Mr Charles Hennel's 'Origin of Christianity,' or any more recent book illustrative of Jewish literature, you will find that Christ merely borrowed statements which were expressed much more forcibly and clearly by the Jewish teachers of his day. They reasoned that God who takes care of the beasts of the field, who feeds the sparrows, and provides for the wild animals, will surely provide for his chosen children, whom he was to deliver from captivity. Christ repeated and dilated this sentiment, adding to it a sentence

which I call ambiguous—'Take no thought for the morrow,' nor pay any special attention to the preservation of your own life. Well, the explanation which will come must be of this nature, that Christ meant something else than that which is put down here. My friend will turn to his Greek lexicon and give us a statement as to what is meant by the passage. I only hope he will be able to explain the whole thing away, because, as it now stands, it teaches the ruinous doctrine that no man is to take any thought for the morrow. My friend may say, it means take no *anxious* thought for the morrow, but that will not do, because if we take no anxious thought for the morrow, it is just possible that the morrow will fail to take care of us.

Another passage to which I shall refer is the following (Matt. v. 38-42): 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.' Now, on this matter my argument will be short. You have heard the passage read—the meaning is clear, the language straightforward. If Christ meant this, why do you not practice it? and if he did not mean this, why did he not say what he did mean? Go and put this doctrine to any Christian; ask him to give you his clothes or to lend you his money, or to go with you twain when you require him to go with you a single mile—try to reduce any of these precepts to practice, and you will find the whole Christian world at war against them. My friend may refer me to persons who in ancient time endeavoured to do so, but I say it is not moral to attempt to do it. The instincts of my heart tell me it is not moral or useful that this unreasoning subserviency should be acted. You must say one of two things: if you say Christ meant something else, then where is the perspicuity of his language? if he meant something else, he has not spoken accurately. If you say that Christ meant what his language implies, how can you call that a moral precept which none feel able to reduce to practice? That which is moral is clear and in itself useful. Dr Paley says: 'The intelli-

gence which is not exerted may as well not exist,' and the moral precept which cannot be practised, might as well never have been given. You tell us not to resist evil—what is that but to give a long lease to tyranny, to permit it to ride rough-shod over the world, and to subdue, with the authority of a Divine sanction, all humble and oppressed peoples, who ought to unite in resisting the oppressors who would destroy them. If any man, desiring to keep the people in tyrannical subjection, had sought to bring the wise and noble doctrine of peace—the glorious principle, when wisely and philosophically stated, of overcoming evil, in some wise way, with good—into contempt, and to state it so impotently that no man ever could act upon it, he could not have uttered words more disastrous to liberty than Christ himself here utters. I say not this for the purpose of raising an idle cavil as to the interpretation of the Bible, of putting my friend in the wrong, or uttering words which may be painful to Christian ears. For myself, I cannot carry these precepts out; I do not profess to do so. I object to have put before me precepts which I cannot reduce to practice, and to be denounced as an opprobrious person—to have pronounced against me the judgments of heaven because I do not hold as true precepts which Christians themselves do not reduce to practice. My argument therefore is, that you ought either to withdraw these passages or reduce them to practice; or allow that Christ expressed more than was needful, and laid down rules which none of his followers in any age or country ever carried out, or ever will. There can be no greater reproach to your moral precepts than that, whilst found in a book which you say contains the words of divine wisdom, uttered by the Great Teacher, there is not a man among you who has the courage or even intention to reduce them to practice.

Mr RUTHERFORD: My friend's remarks on the question of justification by organisation and circumstances leave it exactly as it stood when I called attention to it in my last speech of Monday evening. His real doctrine is, that man can be held responsible neither for his faith nor conduct. He cannot prove that I have either misapprehended or misrepresented his own words. He may now adopt different language, but is there any

abandonment of the principles so nakedly stated? The great Ruler of the universe will not disregard any of the circumstances of man's lot in forming an estimate of his moral desert, and he will not overlook the great facts, that, as a moral agent, he enjoyed unfettered freedom, and that he was furnished with motives sufficiently powerful, when considered, to preserve him amid temptation. My friend dislikes the idea of responsibility for faith; but is it not a matter of fact that a man's disposition and habits have very much to do in the formation of his opinions; and that on many moral subjects his belief is, to a great extent, controlled by his inclination. We are conscious, indeed, that we cannot believe that two and two are five; but it must be remembered that the great majority of truths which are indispensable to man's highest welfare in the present life are not mathematical, but moral truths, and rest upon evidence of a different kind, which does not compel the assent of the understanding, but requires calm, deliberate, unbiassed consideration. Have infidels themselves never spoken,—and I use the word infidels, not in any opprobrious sense, but simply to designate those who do not believe in Christianity;—have, I ask, infidels themselves never spoken, and do they never now speak, as if men were responsible for their faith? Why the everlasting cry against priestly dogmas? Why their invectives against the creeds of the churches? Why their very condemnation of the dogma that men *are* responsible for their faith? If men are neither the worse nor the better for their intellectual creeds, why this war against them? Why not let them alone? Why not turn to something more useful? Wherefore does our friend urge so earnestly the argument of utility in reference to our opinions, if he does not think that such an argument will tell upon the will, and thus affect men's faith? Every one is perfectly familiar with illustrations of the position that our faith is influenced by our inclination. Is it never supposed that the position of the slaveholder has something to do with his views of the slave's position and nature? Do men never dream that persons carrying on a traffic that is productive of the most blighting effects upon the hearts and homes of thousands of their fellowmen, are sometimes rather impervious to the most eloquent and powerful arguments against that traffic? Do none among our work-

ing classes cherish the idea that the priests, as they are called, are personally interested in defending a 'worn-out creed,' and in propping up that tree which Evans Bell, a leading Secularist, tells us is now sapless, pithless, and rotten, with nothing left but the bark; and have others of those gentlemen who once chose the appellation of Atheist, but who have abandoned it for Secularist, done nothing to produce this impression? Yea, does not our friend himself think that his views would more rapidly spread and more openly be avowed, were it not for the persecution which they evoke?—thus proving that a man's views are sometimes affected by his interests, and that the inclination has something to do both with the belief and the avowal of opinions.

Mental power and acquired knowledge may be abused, and frequently are. It is not always the man who has the best opportunities for knowing, and the strongest mental powers, who always arrives at the most just conclusions. The slave of vice may dislike a pure and strict system of virtue; and a heart full of overweening pride may not bend to truth that would strip it of its self-confidence.

I do not mean to teach that man can call up faith within him by a direct act of volition. Truth must be presented; it must be supported by evidence; and when the mind is free from improper bias, and duly weighs that evidence, faith will be the result. But inclination may have much to do in directing the attention or otherwise to the truth that is so presented. Now, it seems to me that Christianity is supported by evidence sufficiently clear and powerful to secure the faith of the man who looks at it from a proper stand-point, and who is willing to take a full view of its scheme of doctrine, its principles of morality, and its supernatural evidences. Here is truth in itself the purest, the most sublime, the most peace-giving, the most elevating, supported by evidence such as we can find for no other system of truth whatever; and where it is presented to the mind with its appropriate evidence and is not received, after calm deliberation and due study, it must be that there is something vitiating in the mind itself.

I can freely admit that my friend may not wish to teach a doctrine that would pollute, degrade, and demoralise the people, but all his remarks on the point do not convince

me that such is not the natural tendency of the dogma of justification by circumstances and organisation. That position has an influence, and in many cases a very powerful influence over human conduct, I do not doubt; but that it overmasters the will my consciousness denies, and if I read aright the history of the world, and interpret correctly the phenomena which I daily see around me, the universal experience of man in all ages equally denies it. Go to the murderer's cell and tell him that he was a mere puppet in the hand of an inexorable necessity; try all the powers of your logic upon him, and though he would gladly receive it as a sedative to that feeling of remorse which, like an undying worm is gnawing at his heart, and though he may tell you with his lips that he believes it true, yet the false philosophy, plausible as it is, breaks down before the terrible power of his own imperishable consciousness, and you have not left his cell a moment ere his conscience gives the lie to that which he has laboured to believe, that in committing the crime he was as much a creature of necessity as the locomotive which crushes a human body beneath its ponderous tread. Go to the men whose miserable selfishness is spreading the pall of sadness over the homes of their youth, bringing parents' grey hairs down with sorrow to the grave, guiding children's steps into paths of vice, and breaking tender hearts that cling to them all the more on account of their wretchedness—go and preach to them your doctrine, and if they can believe it, it will harden them in their crimes, and somewhat mitigate the scorpion-bite of conscience. No; you say, mention not the doctrine, but labour to improve their circumstances and lessen their temptations. In this will I join with you heart and hand, but O refuse not to me that gospel of forgiveness which, while it condemns their sin, will sweep away the dark clouds of despair from the horizon of their souls, will give them an invincible will, a renovated nature, and a glorious destiny. Such a gospel you confess you have not to give; attempt not then to take that away which is the only hope for man. This is in reality the doctrine which attaches the weightiest sanctions to conduct, and which contains the element of reformation for the man who receives it, as well as that of destruction to the man who rejects it. In the expiation for sin there is the loftiest, and the most affecting moral instruction.

On your ground no amount of instruction is of any use to persons of certain organisations placed in circumstances of powerful temptation. Indeed, morality is impossible if the dogma of necessity is true. If all men's opinions and conduct are equally inevitable, the distinction between virtue and vice is a mere dream; there is nothing to praise in the most magnanimous, nothing to reprobate in the most vile, for whatever the worst may do there is a sufficient apology in their organisation and circumstances. On such ground there is no room for moral judgment or moral criticism. A standard of morality would be unnecessary, and a moral teacher could not well be praised for the usefulness of his precepts nor condemned for their impracticability. A dogma that would sap the very foundations of all virtue, we trust will never be received, however plausibly it may be put, or however speciously advocated.

It is urged against the teachings of Christ that some of them are ambiguous. Now to our minds they may seem of doubtful meaning, but is this evidence that they appeared so to those to whom they were first addressed? And are there no means by which we can arrive at their signification? In studying the teachings of great minds must we demand a premium for indolence? Is it evidence, in the case of a saying originally addressed to a Jew, that, because we do not at once comprehend it, it is in itself ambiguous? If any teacher will produce a great and abiding impression upon any people, must he not present truth in that related aspect to them which will take the deepest hold on their intellect, their sympathies, and their will? must he not consider their previous training, their preconceived ideas, and their modes of thought? And while thus perhaps in its first proclamation, only its relative and limited side is seen, may it not have an absolute and universal side, which the true and diligent student will endeavour to evolve and grasp?

Not till the utmost effort has been made to ascertain the manners, customs, opinions, education and modes of thought of the taught, and the general sentiments and aim of the teacher—not till all the resources of pure, honest, and enlightened criticism have been exhausted, should a statement be marked as ambiguous; and even then, were the result not satisfactory, humility might suggest that the fault might be more in us than in the

Teacher, especially if he brings with him the credentials of heaven, and if the entire strain of his teaching is as morally effective as it is sublimely simple. If there is a thick film over my eye it may lead me to speak in doubt of the sun's shining, or if it is jaundiced, objects around may appear very different from what they truly are: and I submit to my friend whether in a controversy in which he supposes 'infantine truth' has to contend with 'full-grown error,' he may not be led to look at the statements of Christ through an unfavourable medium.

It must be conceded, too, that in the interpretation of truth much depends on mental sympathy. I believe that there is enough in Christianity to rivet the attention, to charm the mind, and to give an impregnable foundation for confidence in its truth, but it is only the man who, in the inner region of his thoughts, as well as in the seen sphere of his conduct, lives in harmony with it, to whom some of its teachings will ever seem increasing in perspicuity and power. Lustrously may shine forth the pole-star of truth, but if the conscience is not true to it, thick fogs may set in that will soon leave the soul exposed to the breakers of moral ruin. Spiritual sensibility may be starved upon a marrowless criticism, as well as strangled by the rude hand of open vice. And if you do not put yourselves in contact with those media through which you will receive spiritual light, you must not wonder if passages that are full of significance and beauty to others, seem ambiguous or even worthless to you.

Without imputing either ignorance or incapacity to my friend, may I say that it grieves me much that, in certain instances, he has given all the weight of his influence to the dissemination of the most erroneous and unwarrantable interpretations of certain passages in the Scriptures. I may refer to one glaring case—the construction that he has put upon Paul's words—'Therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head'—a construction the very opposite of its true and manifest meaning. In reference to it he says in his discussion with Mr Bowes, page 73: 'Better not show a man a kindness at all, if it will be followed by such a diabolical result. It means that we are to do a kindness to others as the best means of doing them an injury. In the days when men were vindictive, this teaching had charms,

and terrible influence.' Now, it seems to me, that he never could have given such a representation of the requirement of that passage if he had not looked at it from a stand-point of antagonism to Christianity. Had he remembered the embodiment of the precept in the conduct of the apostle himself, who could say of his bitterest persecutors, 'I have great heaviness and continual sorrow for them'—whose compassionate heart mourned over their infatuation, surely it must have struck him that coals of fire may be heaped on not to scorch and consume, but to melt and to mould. He might have thought of the fine illustration furnished by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who tells us that when the forest of the Pyrenean mountains was on fire, from the intensity of the heat upon it a rock split, and poured out from a rich vein, which had been undiscovered for centuries, a stream of silver; and might have taught us that thus the manifestation of Jehovah's infinite love in the gift of his Son was calculated to melt the heart of adamant, and that thus we have to seek to break down the enmity of those who would injure us. He might have shown us, too, how the whole passage draws, with the greatest precision, a broad and palpable line of demarcation between our duty, and that of the righteous Governor of the universe: we have in no case, and on no account, to take the part of judge, but to leave all judgment in the hands of Him to whom of necessity it belongs as the great Lawgiver, and the conservator of moral order.

Now, I submit it to my friend, that in more than this instance he may have misapprehended the meaning of other passages; and I bespeak your most careful attention to the exposition of the passages brought up for consideration to-night.

In the sermon on the mount, Christ responds to the incessant, unwearying universal cry of humanity—'Who will show us any good?' He points out the prime elements of well-being. He shows that man's highest happiness has not its source in something merely external to him—not in earthly riches, power, grandeur, dominion; not in world-wide reputation, or in endless fame; not in the gratification of the senses, or the indulgence of the passions; not even in the cultivation of his intellect and his imagination, but in the habitudes of his soul, in the principles, feelings, states of his heart. These are within the reach of all.

They are attainable by the child as well as the adult, by the poor as well as the rich. From hidden springs may flow a pure river of the water of life, making the path of life bloom with beauty, and the wilderness rejoice. These elements are present. Not in the far distant future has man to find his happiness. Happy *are*, says Christ, not happy *shall be*. Trite but true is the saying—Grace is glory begun. In the cultivation of such dispositions as he describes there is happiness, and it is rendered possible by the forgiveness which he has provided for past sin—a blessing which Secularism despises, but which humanity needs—and the soul-moving motives of his life and death. There can be no external heaven if there is no heaven within. Unruly passions, and unholy principles would make the highest spot in the universe seem a prison. A soul beclouded by guilt and blighted by sin would make the sunshine darkness, and turn the sweetest music of the spheres to discord.

The true key to the whole discourse, we apprehend, is found in the wrong ideas which the Jews had formed of the Messiah's kingdom. They needed to change their minds in order to enjoy its blessings. They had a dream of earthly splendour and of universal conquest which needed to be broken. They had views of the source of happiness which, if not dispelled, would rob them of it for ever. Preferring the traditions of the elders to the teachings of God, they had a morality which was external, partial, defective, and delusive. With a perfect disregard of popularity and a noble intrepidity of soul, Christ uttered words which must have fallen as a terrible blow upon their prejudices, and have sounded as the death-knell of their brightest anticipations. They had thought that the highest honours of the Messianic kingdom would be conferred on the rich; they were now taught that these honours could be enjoyed only by those who had formed a right estimate of themselves. They expected nothing but festivity under the new reign; but they are told that the richest consolations are for those who have entered into deepest sympathy with God in reference to their own sins, to abounding iniquity, and to the woes of the world. They had called the proud and the prosperous happy; but the meek sufferer is the happy man and heir of the noblest blessings of the new economy. They had longed for deliverance from a merely temporal bondage; but there is a

better deliverance—an emancipation from sin for which no one could thirst in vain. A fierce and warlike spirit that would resent the wrongs of their country seemed proper to them; but it is a very different disposition that yields peace, and is pleasing to God. They prided themselves on their external sanctity, but those only who were spiritually purified could enjoy intimate fellowship with Jehovah. They had deemed those happy who should be employed to avenge on heathen nations the wrongs of Israel; but men of peace and not of revenge will be recognised as the children of God. They had thought him the happiest man who should enjoy the applause and suffrages of the people; they had to learn that it was better to be on the side of truth, even though it should expose them to severe and lengthened suffering. Christ did not, like many Jewish teachers, seek to invalidate the previous revelation and to weaken its force, but to complete it, and to give it the highest sanctions; while the minutest regulations of the Mosaic institution were binding, until it was abrogated by the full in-bringing of the new dispensation. Till then, Christ assured them, that a neglect of any of its requirements would unfit for a high place in the kingdom which he was about to establish. Christ taught that the religion and morality of the new kingdom was superior to that which was current among them; and in a series of striking illustrations showed that superiority in reference to the life and happiness of others, to chastity, to divorce, to oaths, to retaliation, to the treatment of enemies, and to the duties of beneficence and piety. The object of Jewish supreme desire was a reign of worldly prosperity and glory, under which they might enjoy in abundance riches, honour, and pleasure. Christ informed them that their views were false, that the kingdom and its joys are spiritual; that in the future, and not in the present state, its happiness is found in perfection; that it had to be supremely sought, and that while setting their affections upon it, there was no ground for anxiety about temporal things; they might calmly and unhesitatingly trust in God. The pointed, clear, and spiritual teaching of Christ, it has well been said, compels us to feel that we are in the presence of one, who is come to establish a kingdom in the inner man, to deal with the principles of things, to lay the axe to the roots, to baptise with

the spirit and with fire, to reform the fruit by reforming the tree.

While the application of the principles which we have indicated will guide the earnest student through any apparent difficulties, there are some passages which admit, with advantage, of extended illustration. The first passage to which my friend has referred me in the correspondence preceding this discussion, is Matt. v. 3. Here the expression 'poor in spirit' manifestly refers, not to outward position, but to inward character. It does not signify mean-spirited. The Christian is taught generosity at the cross; the belief of the gospel leads him to feel that it is more blessed to give than to receive. To be poor in spirit, is just the opposite of being proud in spirit; it is not man's thinking of himself as worse than he is, but thinking justly of himself. Where a man perceives the purity, the strictness, the goodness of the divine law, and when he tests his life, his feelings, his motives' his aims by that standard, he realises how grievously, how deeply he has sinned. He attempts not to palliate his guilt, for he knows that he had the strongest motives to obedience. He thinks not of laying the blame upon others, for he knows that he might have done otherwise. The conviction that his past selfishness and sin are at this moment exerting a blighting influence upon many of his fellow-beings, and that he can never make full compensation for the evil he has done, nor retrieve the past, leads him to feel that in his holiest thoughts, in his highest aspirations, in his most ardent consecration, in his most active service, he can never have reason for self-gratulation. Sometimes, when his friends applaud him most, the faithful monitor within will whisper, that did they know all the principles by which he has been influenced, they would not praise him as they do. Say not that I am drawing too dark a picture of man; it is only the picture drawn in that saying of Confucius, which my friend thinks so beautiful, and which he so frequently quotes—Alas, I find none who prefers virtue to personal beauty—a picture which shows how very doubtful is the morality that has no higher guarantee than human nature. And many a conscience can draw the picture of a terrible reality far darker than that!

It is from the deepest pits that the stars are most clearly seen, and it is when man occupies his true position in reference to God's

law and character, that his soul, rising in adoring gratitude exclaims, 'Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage: thou wilt subdue our iniquities and wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.' And in the outflowing of such gratitude is there no happiness? Is not the man who thinks not more highly of himself than he ought to think, likely to avoid harsh judgments of his fellow-beings, and to feel charitably, and to act kindly towards those who may injure or revile him?

But this is not all—'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The expression, 'the kingdom of heaven' does not refer entirely or primarily to a future state of happiness, but to that reign which Jesus came to establish on earth—the empire of peace, of righteousness, of joy, of love. They are under that blissful order of things in which they are delivered from the thraldom of sin, and introduced into the glorious liberty of the children of God—the freedom of reason from the mastery of the passions, and of the soul from the dominion of sense. They enjoy the blessings of that earth-gladdening reign which is the type and the foretaste of the heavenly glory.

Mr Holyoake objects generally to the morality of the New Testament, that it is defective. He tells us that it has sometimes noble aspirations, but that it wants explanation, demonstration, and development. Now, has he shown, or will he be able to show us anything superior in these respects, to the morality which was taught by Christ and his apostles? He comes to find fault with the moral precepts of Christ, and we have a right to demand of him that he show us a better system—that he give us a higher standard of morality. He should furnish us with data by which we may contrast the morality of Christianity with the morality of Secularism. There is no surer way in which he could supplant the teachings of Christ in the minds of wise and good men, than by giving us precepts purer, nobler, more expansive and universal in their aspect. He must give us a higher aspiration than that of likeness to God—of assimilation to the Divine moral image—'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' He must give us a system that has a better explanation

or example than is found in the life of the Divine Redeemer, who not merely gave precepts to the world, but embodied those precepts in a holy and sublime life—a life of matchless interest in the welfare of man, and of unwearied consecration to the cause of God and of truth. He must give us a system that has higher demonstration of its usefulness and worth than is given in the undeniably blessed effects produced by Christianity upon the hearts and lives of thousands and millions, ever since it was first preached. When he tells us that tyranny may flourish under the teachings of Christ, we ask him to show us a land that enjoys more of the fruits of freedom, than that where Christianity most triumphs. Can he point us to any precepts of other moralists which have told so powerfully and beneficially upon the hearts and minds of the people, and upon human governments as Christianity has done? Has any other system done so much for the slave? Where but under the influence of Christian principle do we find mankind breaking the fetters of the bondsman? Where do we meet with the most earnest efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people? Where the most philanthropic institutions? Where do we find the purest morality? Where do we find the greatest freedom? Is it where the light of Christianity has never shone? Is it in Italy where the Bible is fettered? Is it in Spain where the teachings of Christ are neither read nor studied by the people? If he tells us that the teachings of Christ are opposed to men's highest welfare, that the morality of the New Testament would lead men to imbecility, would make men abject and bring them into vassalage, he ought to show from facts that such is its tendency; but he has utterly failed. That his own interpretation of passages would produce such results, is no evidence.

He says the world is waiting for a definition of charity, and that much is said and much that is beautiful has been written about charity, but none have told us what charity is, and that if such an one should arise the governments and the people of the earth would listen to him. Now, I think, the world had the matter distinctly explained eighteen centuries ago, in the beautiful and graphic words of Paul—'She seeketh not her own.' (Hear, hear.) The charity of the New Testament is beneficence

—a living not unto ourselves, but seeking the happiness, the highest welfare, for time and for eternity, of our fellowmen; and I ask you, my friends, and I confidently put it to Mr Holyoake, if the carrying out of this simple principle—if the development of it in men's conduct, would not dry up a thousand fountains of misery? would not make this earth a paradise? And this is the principle under which Christianity places its disciples. It casts out the demon of selfishness, and enthrones benevolence in its stead. We need wait, then, neither for a definition nor a development of charity. We find both in the teachings and in the life of that Divine Instructor who went about continually doing good.

Mr HOLYOAKE:—One sentence or so is all I shall expend upon the matter with which Mr Rutherford opened his speech. My friend is the victim of a word, *Responsibility*, which is perplexing him. In a religious sense, it means liability to supplementary punishment at the hands of God for sins committed. In the 'natural consequences' of vice and virtue, I believe, and these are the great circumstances we seek to employ for the betterance and government of the people. He has an idea perpetually before him of retribution. We do not want to bring down retribution on the head of the sinner, but instruction and reformation; we do not want to destroy or to punish, but to enlighten and save the erring, and that is a far nobler philosophy for the salvation of humanity—far more worthy of the study of man and the divine scheme for the government of the world, than a philosophy of salvation which has an eternal perdition ever looming, ready to fall on the head of the unhappy sinner, who feels that he has been placed with an erring nature in a world of temptation. With much pleasant unconsciousness, my friend told you that he did not use the word 'infidel' in an opprobrious sense: then if it can be used in a sense not opprobrious, there can be nothing opprobrious in it, and he ought to see that if it be right in him, on the ground of courtesy, to take out of the term infidel the sting of imputing to me conscious guilt, a good God can never have put that sting there—that what he from courtesy is obliged to disown, and in good fellowship to reject, God cannot have placed there, and will not remember there. In the obser-

vations lately addressed to us, my friend was very eloquent, but he was not so much to the point as I think we have a right to expect. He says, 'Show me a better system!' If that were the subject of discussion, I am prepared to do it. But we are met here (and we are bound to keep faith with this audience) to determine whether certain precepts which I may mention can be justified from the charges of ambiguity and impracticability. It would be easy to propose a hundred other questions, but no solution of other questions can settle the one topic of debate to-night. Hence, when my friend tells me that in this country we boast alike of our freedom and our Christianity, and asks me to point to any country without Christianity where so much freedom exists, he altogether overlooks the fact that we are here discussing whether it is a wholesome precept to lay down that you shall not resist evil, but turn one cheek to be smitten when the other has been struck. I say, England owes her glory and independence by not practising that precept. Some time ago a member of the Peace Society, believing as Mr Rutherford believes, wrote an absurd pamphlet, with which Lord Palmerston amused a Christian House of Commons—the pamphlet urged the kind reception of the French invaders, in which case, the author said, they would be ashamed of what they were doing, and return after apologising. If they were to turn one cheek after the other to the smiter, they all knew what the French would do. Mr Rutherford forgets, when he reminds us of our freedom and civilisation (and we do boast of these), that we have won these by disregarding the very precept which he is here to defend. Then my friend said very energetically that Italy was now closed to the Bible, and that if it were only read there, everything would soon be in a most exquisite state. Now, if the Romish people were to banish from Italy only the Bible, and to admit all other books, Italy would not suffer so very much. We all know that Rome not only banishes the Bible, but a thousand other books besides. It is not the Bible which makes up the sum of civilisation, but the immense amount of knowledge everywhere in our libraries on which we pride ourselves, and of which Christians avail themselves; and in a moment of perhaps pardonable egotism they

ascribe it all to Christianity. In explaining the meaning of charity Mr Rutherford said very pleasantly that St Paul had done so when he declared that it consists in seeking not your own. Why, if you do not seek your own, you will have nothing to give, and therefore cannot be charitable at all. (Murmurs.) You utter exclamations of astonishment at such meaning of this passage. I tell you I am quite willing to put the best interpretation I can upon it; but mark you, when I do so, you denounce against me perdition because I do not interpret it as you do, whilst you express surprise when you see to how many interpretations it is liable. You dare not say the passage is not open to the interpretation I put upon it. How important it is to know in what sense St Paul made the declaration, since he said, if an angel from heaven were to preach any other gospel than that which he preached, he was to be accursed. When such a curse is thus uttered against the holiest dissenter who ever lived, the man it may be of the purest intention and the clearest perception of moral truth, how important it is to know in what sense Paul used the passage which my friend has quoted. I mention this, not to put a worse construction on passages than they will bear, but to show you that if God had spoken, he would have spoken so that all the world might have understood, and that no man could doubt his meaning. *He* would have left no double meanings open. What is the boast of your tutor, the pride of your college professor, the grandeur of the philosopher or didactic teacher—what is the measure of excellence in any instructor? Why, that he teaches to you, and observes himself, the art of speaking not only so that he may be understood, but so that he cannot by possibility be misunderstood. That is the practical perfection of speech—men reach it, why should Christ fall short of it? We have it in human, why should it not be in sacred books? My friend says, the teacher being divine, we ought to conclude that the fault is rather in us than in him. Quite the contrary; for if the teacher be divine and infinite, and I am frail and finite, he the better knows how to reach my understanding and to use terms which cannot be misunderstood. My friend proceeds upon the assumption common to theologians, in which I am sure he would not indulge consciously, that we look at holy

writ in a fault-finding spirit, intending to mistake its meaning; he ought rather to believe that we take the book just as it is, wishing to derive wisdom and guidance from its contents. It is only when he insists that we shall take every syllable of every verse, however imperfect the expression or injudicious the sentiment, under the terrible penalty of eternal perdition, that we speak of the different modes of interpreting Scripture. If he denounces me as one who holds not the Christian faith, as one who *wilfully* turns away from the truth, as one who holds a philosophy and preaches a doctrine which I know will do harm to mankind, if he point against me the judgments of men and the condemnation of Deity, I have a right to demand that the words which he puts before me for my acceptance, under the terrible seal of celestial penalties, shall not be open to a double interpretation—that they shall appeal to my understanding, and shall convey such precepts as you yourselves reduce to practice.

If it be true, as my friend has been pleasantly supposing, that the fault is in myself, that these passages are perfectly intelligible and satisfactory, how is it that Christians have been for hundreds of years putting day by day such contrary interpretations upon them? Did you hear one word from Mr Rutherford telling us that these precepts are not binding upon us now? Does not Christ say we are not to resist evil? Now, that means what it says or it does not—if it means what it says, do you act upon it? Can you, dare you act upon it? Would it not be a sin against your own conscience, and bring down upon you the condemnation of mankind? My friend will probably put upon these words a different interpretation from that which they obviously bear, but the moment he does that, he justifies my very moderate charge against the precept—that its language is ambiguous, that it does not express clearly and explicitly what is intended. And I find in your own conduct the most eloquent argument that it is impracticable, because you do not and dare not reduce it to practice. No man turns one cheek to be smitten when the other is struck; no man lends money to whoever asks him for it; no man gives his cloak when his coat is demanded—you don't do these things, and society would not hang together if you did; and I am frank and free to tell you, that if any body else but Christ had said we were to do these things, you would not have

believed him for a moment. If the precepts had been found in the Koran of Mahommed, or the Book of Mormon, or any heathen scriptures, how from pulpit to pulpit would have been proclaimed the inanity, weakness, and inappositeness of sentiments like these! It is only because they are found in a book which we are taught to regard as Divine, and which we are bid to receive under pain of eternal perdition, that you believe precepts to which no man pays the compliment of reducing to practice.

I will not, however, be diverted from justifying my own declaration as completely as it is my duty to do; and for this purpose I am going to read a short passage from the new edition of 'Phases of Faith,' by Professor Newman; and before doing so, I will say, that any one who reads Mr Rogers's 'Eclipse of Faith,' to which that work is an answer, must have been struck with the bitterness, flippancy, uncandid suppression, and misrepresentation of Mr Rogers, who writes on the Christian side, and comparing this with the more gentlemanly, frank, and spiritual nature which Mr Newman manifests, he can have no doubt on which side is the capacity for judging of the Scriptures reverentially, and speaking the whole truth about them. Mr Newman, alluding to the injunction which condemned the young man to what he calls religious beggary—directing him to sell all that he had and give to the poor—thus writes: 'Protestants universally reject it as a deplorable absurdity—not merely wealthy bishops, squires, and merchants, but the poorest curate also. A man could not preach such doctrine in a Protestant pulpit, without incurring deep reprobation and contempt; but when preached by Jesus, it is extolled as divine wisdom—and disobeyed. Now I cannot look on this as a pure intellectual error consistent with moral perfection. A deep mistake as to the nature of such perfection seems to meinherent in the precept itself; a mistake which indicates a moral unsoundness. The conduct of Jesus to the rich man appears to me a melancholy exhibition of perverse doctrine, under an ostentation of superior wisdom. The young man asked for bread, and Jesus gave him a stone. Justly he went away sorrowful, at receiving a reply which his conscience rejected as false and foolish. But this is not all. Jesus was necessarily on trial, when any one, however sincere, came to ask questions so deeply probing to his wisdom

as this: How may I be perfect? and to be on trial was always disagreeable to him. He first gave the reply, "Keep the commandments;" and if the young man had been satisfied, and had gone away, it appears that Jesus would have been glad to be rid of him; for his tone is magisterial, decisive, and final. This, I confess, suggests to me that the aim of Jesus was not so much to *enlighten* the young man, as to stop his mouth, and keep up his own ostentation of Omniscience. Had he desired to enlighten him, surely no mere dogmatic command was needed, but an intelligent guidance of a willing and trusting soul. I do not pretend to certain knowledge in these matters. Even when we hear the tones of the voice, and watch the features, we often mistake. We have no such means here of checking the narrative. But the best general result which I draw from the imperfect materials is what I have said.' Here is an author who profoundly reverences much of the humanity and spiritual nature of Jesus, and who feels bound in conscience thus to speak. And you ought not to hear this language in terms of complaint. You have been perpetually saying to us, make your comparisons, bring before us other systems, compare the moralists of ancient days with those of our own time, and when you hear the comparison, you meet it with a hiss. Now that is not fair. We have just as much right, if you trust your own creed, if you make the challenge, to speak freely of Christ as of Socrates. If you bring subjects into discussion, you ought not to shrink from the discussion which you invite. I will, therefore, add one or two illustrations from the chapters, references to which I have already placed in the hands of Mr Rutherford. To what I am about to quote I have no objection; I want Mr Rutherford not to explain it, but to tell me I may trust it. I put upon him no hard task—I only ask him to authorise me to believe that Christ meant what he says here; for if I may trust what I am now going to read, then this discussion will have been useful, and my friend and myself will have been drawn much closer together in intellectual conviction:—'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.' That is a noble sentiment, and if

Christ laid down this precept for us to follow, surely we cannot be in danger of the judgment; if we ought to forgive our enemies, surely God will forgive me, being no enemy at all. My friend has demanded to-night, with some earnestness, what means I would provide for pardoning the sinner? If this passage be true, God has already forgiven us, for if we are to forgive our enemies, you dare not say that God will not forgive. Christ himself, when he made his own prayer, when he taught his disciples how they should pray, used precisely the argument I am now applying, for he said, 'Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' Here is a maxim of wholesome morality; men are told to forgive their enemies, and reminded that God does so, and will consequently forgive them. If I may trust and believe this—if there is congruity between the precepts which Christ lays down and the principles on which God acts, then there is an end to this debate as to our danger of the judgment and the necessity for pardon. You say that we ought to forgive even our enemies, and bless them that may hate us or do us harm, and you cannot therefore say that God will cast us into outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth for not doing as others wish us to do. I rest this matter on a single point. If you say the precept I have quoted is not intended to indicate the moral government of God, you introduce inextricable confusion. You lay down one principle of action for man and another for God. If we are to forgive our enemies and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us, and God does not forgive his enemies, how can you place him before us as the object of our study? for what benefit can we derive from the contemplation of such a model, seeing there is such a glaring contradiction between the precepts of Christ and the judgment of the Father? My friend, for the credit of Christianity and the gospel which he commends, must tell us whether we are to believe this precept, whether it is over-stated, whether God is worse than his creatures, whether we with our errors and feeble capacities may trust to the forgiveness of that God who pardons even his enemies, or whether we are to despise a precept which is the glory of Christ's gospel and the grandeur of Christianity wherever carried out. Allow me to say

I was struck with a very unconscious presumption on the part of Mr Rutherford—I am sure he would have thought it very wrong in me; he seemed to think that I was rather harsh and unfair, and that there was some hanging back on my part as to moral willingness to rely implicitly on the words of Christ, that I did not show sufficient respect to the divine nature in venturing to put a new interpretation on the passage I had quoted; yet did you hear with what confidence Mr Rutherford undertook to put himself above Christ and to tell us what he meant! We had a long and laboured exposition as to Christ's meaning, as though Christ's language was not plain, and could not be easily understood—as though he had delivered sentiments which mankind were unable to read accurately without assistance. Surely if Christ's language was not ambiguous it did not require explanation. Perfect moral philosophy stood in need of no explanation, and was not open to the possibility of doubtful interpretation; human language accomplishes this—we are justified, therefore, in arguing that precepts alleged to be divine should have this merit, and that they are ambiguous, since, with the best intention, we understand them differently; and you who profess to understand them rightly, do not think for a moment of carrying them into practice.

Mr RUTHERFORD:—To justify his declaration, that some of Christ's teachings are ambiguous, and some impracticable, Mr Holyoake has read a lengthened extract from the last edition of the 'Phases of Faith,' in reference to Christ's interview with the young man who came to him inquiring what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life. Now, to me it seems that the instructions of Christ were admirably adapted to the young man's spiritual condition. Is it not manifest that if his idol was gold—if the love of money stood in the way of his salvation, the direction given to him was necessary to break his idol, and was fitted to empty his heart for the reception of that truth which alone could save him from sin and misery? By a law of our spiritual nature, our happiness cannot be perfect unless God is the object of our supreme affection. Any being, or any thing less good and glorious, can never fully meet the aspirations of the soul. To be without him as an undying portion, is to leave a void which all

creation cannot satisfy. Any object that keeps a man from enjoying this treasure is a barrier to his happiness, and he who seeks to turn him from it acts the part of a true friend. If man's highest progress in goodness. and in bliss depends upon the elevation of his affections from debasing pursuits and grovelling objects, it is the highest wisdom in any moral teacher to seek to accomplish this for his disciple, even though it should appear to require the costliest sacrifice. Man becomes assimilated to the character of the object that he worships. Mammon-worship was manifestly the young man's besetting sin; he could not but be degraded by it. Gold was his idol; in order to his salvation, that idol must be dethroned, and God must occupy a similar place in his affections. The answer of Christ was given with this object, and not as is represented by Mr Newman, to evade the question and have done with the inquirer. I wish not to bring any harsh and unfounded allegation against the opponents of Christianity, but I do think they do not bring that candour, that honesty, that charity to the examination of the statements of Christ which they expect us to bring to the investigation of the statements and objections which they make. If you do not look at the connexion in which words occur, if you do not take into consideration the circumstances under which they were uttered, if you do not regard the respective position of the parties, if you pay no attention to the known character of the speaker and his general aim, you can never expect to arrive at a correct understanding of his meaning, and honesty of interpretation there can be none. Mr Holyoake sees how important it is to examine the context when he has a friend to defend; and why should he not, when the teachings of Christ are under review? In the Cowper Street Discussion, if I remember rightly, in order to show that Secularists have not freed debate from imputation, Mr Grant quoted from the 'Cabinet of Reason,' the statement of Evans Bell, that 'Christianity is the mother of hypocrisy and malignity.' Mr Holyoake endeavoured to exculpate him, by saying that though he could not find the passage, he had no doubt that the context would lead us to understand the language in a modified sense. We might find many other illustrations of this kind, showing that he must know that we ought always to take words in their connexion: and that to dissever them from that connexion, in a

thousand instances, would be signally to misunderstand their real meaning. The simple application of this rule would go far toward the removal of all the objections which have been urged to-night against the precepts of Christ. It is especially our duty, with such a book as the New Testament, to take it up and earnestly study it in the original; for we can scarcely expect equal force and perspicuity in any translation. Until all men speak one tongue we could not reasonably expect a revelation in a universal language. When it is given in a particular language, and we do not master it, the cry of ambiguity and impracticability may only be the utterance of our ignorance. When we come to it as critics, we ought to be guided by fair canons of interpretation; we ought not to put on any passage a construction which the context does not warrant. Now it is because Mr Holyoake forgets these things that he puts a meaning on certain passages which no competent biblical critic or commentator had dreamt of before. We cannot attain useful knowledge without the cultivation of our mental powers; and we have no reason to expect a revelation to free moral agents whose every moral precept could not possibly be misunderstood. In the field of science we have no progress without research and study; how can we expect it in the field of revelation? In the passages to which exception has been taken, is it not clear that we are bound to weigh the meaning of the original words, to examine the context, to consider the prejudices and moral position of the people originally addressed, to mark their preconceived opinions and modes of thought, and thus to see whether Christ's moral precepts were not pre-eminently applicable them. Thus we may find the grand principles of morality presented in a phase specially adapted to the wants of the people then; and this only proves the wisdom of the teacher, while his leading precepts were easy to be understood, and universal in their application, and, with the great doctrines which he taught and the stupendous miracles he wrought, proved him to be Divine.

Mr Holyoake has dwelt upon the command of Christ to love our enemies. He admires that precept, and wishes to know if he may trust it. Wherefore should he not? He argues that if it is our duty to love our enemies, we may expect that God will love his enemies. Well, he has done so. He has manifested the purest and most disinterested love to his enemies. 'God com-

mendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' He has made the greatest conceivable sacrifice for the present well-being and the everlasting happiness of his enemies—to arrest them in their career of sin, and to save them from its bitter and endless consequences. He every day blesses those who forget, who curse, and who deny him. He does not withhold his mercies from those who blaspheme his holy name, and who make themselves pests in the moral universe. He gives his bright sun to shine upon them, and the balmy breezes of heaven fan their cheeks. He gives them intelligent minds. He gives them the capacity of thought and of affection. He gives them the position of moral agents. He affords abundant opportunity for choosing between life and death. He gives them moral freedom; they are not the creatures of an unbending necessity. In their rebellion he does not immure them in some gloomy dungeon; nor does he seek to embitter their existence. Goodness and forbearance and long-suffering mark his treatment of them. He is not willing that they should perish, but seeks to bring them to repentance. He spares and blesses them. Through the propitiation of his Son, he holds out to them a free pardon—yea, he presses it upon their acceptance; and if they yet stubbornly refuse the great remedy provided for their deliverance from sin, if they spurn the great Redeemer, if they dash from their lips the cup of salvation, must we incessantly be told that he is to blame, because they perish? God challenges the intelligent universe to show what more could have been done in his moral vineyard that he has not done in it. At the great day of account he will vindicate his treatment of men, and to all it will be manifest that he has done right. It is argued that because we are commanded to forgive our enemies, we cannot be in danger of the judgment; that God cannot be less magnanimous than he requires man to be. But the argument overlooks entirely the relationship between God and man. While it is proved that God loves his enemies, has no distinction to be made between a subject and a governor? are there no duties incumbent on a governor in his

public capacity as lawgiver and judge that are not incumbent upon him as a private individual? As a private citizen he may righteously and honourably forgive the man that injures him without any satisfaction; but if, in the capacity of judge, he stands up and declares that the criminal, whose guilt has been clearly proved, may go free at the bar, that he should not be punished, that he may go on to commit crime without any apprehension of the consequences, and that he will never suffer for the wrong that he has done to others, every right-minded man would at once say that he was not fit to be a judge. What righteousness would there be in sacrificing the welfare of society and the highest interests of the community to the safety and comfort of an individual who had forfeited the liberty of a citizen? Such a course if tolerated, would be productive of the most appalling consequences. Society would at once lose its safeguard and become a perfect chaos of confusion. The just and the honourable would have no security against the attacks of the lawless and the selfish; and society under such a regime would speedily become a scene of desolation and misery. And if it could be made out that the Eternal Judge in his moral awards makes no distinction between virtue and vice, that the man who has been utterly reckless of the welfare of his fellow-beings enjoys his approval equally with the man who has lived and laboured to benefit all around him, there would be no room for trust in God. If all at last are treated alike; if the destiny of the selfish monster who, to gratify his own passions, tramples on the dearest rights of man, and breaks the tenderest ties of the human heart, is as glorious as the destiny of the man who has devoted the energies of a whole life to works of mercy, I see not where there would be any ground for confidence in God. If the great Arbiter makes no distinction in future destinies between the righteous and the wicked, inextricable confusion must be introduced into men's moral judgments. If God is not holy—if he is not the enemy of sin—if he does not brand it with his disapprobation—if he does not permit it to develop its natural results—if he does not punish it—if he does not express any displeasure when man continues to pour contempt upon the salvation which he has provided, who can have confidence in his rule, who can own allegiance to his sway? If there is no ground for confidence in the govern-

ment of God, there is no resting-place in the universe for the human mind, there is no object on which it can repose with abiding satisfaction and joy. Let the confidence of holy beings in the truthfulness and justice of the Divine character be shaken, and the moral harmony of the universe is broken. There would be no breakwater to prevent the universal spread of sin, to prevent the overthrow of every right principle, and the engulphing of the dearest and best interests of intelligent beings. To treat all creatures alike without any reference to moral character, would be to sap the foundations of Heaven's throne, to sweep away every vestige of confidence in his rule, and to spread the funeral pall of despair over the entire moral universe. God can never do this. He reigns, and will judge righteous judgment. If Mr Holyoake can make it out clearly that there is no distinction between the judge and the private citizen in reference to offences against public law—if he can make it out that there is no moral government, no moral law in the universe, then there may be weight in his argument; if he can make it out that the universal Governor needs neither to uphold the honour of his law, nor regard the welfare of his universal empire, nor maintain consistency and justice in his moral awards, then his objection may have some force; but till then, it is gratuitous and worthless.

When it is argued that some of Christ's teachings are ambiguous, we are assured that had God spoken all the world would have understood; that there would have been no need of explanation; and that it would have been impossible for any one to be in doubt. Here my friend takes it for granted that, because we arrive at a conclusion different from his, the passages are of doubtful meaning. He is further supposing, what he would require to prove, that the whole world is in the same moral position in reference to truth, and that truth must not be presented to the human mind in its relative aspect, but absolutely. Adaptation is one of the first requisites in any moral teacher, and no one can candidly examine the precepts of Christ without seeing how admirably fitted they were to the state of the Jews; and it does not require any profound or protracted study to perceive their universal adaptation to man. If we candidly and carefully examine them, we shall find that they have a meaning applicable to us, and that they are equally pure and good and useful. Mr

Holyoake would have you believe that, because I stand up here to defend and to illustrate the teachings of Christ, I set myself above Christ, and that his language must have been ambiguous, else it would not require illustration. Now it would be quite as logical to come to the conclusion that some of the moral precepts of the New Testament are ambiguous simply because Mr Holyoake says so, and because he clings to his position, although there appears no great difficulty in ascertaining their meaning. That a moral precept is capable of expanded application and illustration is no evidence that it is ambiguous. We may attempt to give a correct and critical rendering of Christ's teaching, without dreaming of setting ourselves above the Great Teacher. By what law are we bound to receive Mr Holyoake's version? It appears that moral philosophy needs no explanation; but where do you find the common people understanding the teachings of philosophy better than the teachings of Christ? It seems necessary to vindicate the moral precepts of Christ from misrepresentation; to urge upon men who come to criticise those precepts, the importance of considering the state of the minds of the people to whom Jesus spoke, and of earnestly seeking to ascertain the bearing of these precepts upon ourselves. In the great principles of his morality there is no ambiguity whatever, and a very little earnest and candid study will give us the full meaning of any passages that at first seem difficult.

The passage—'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,' seems to be a stumbling-block to my friend. He wants to know who are meant by the meek, and he thinks that they will never inherit the earth. Now it seems to me that the meek are those who, under suffering and wrong, do not cherish towards those who may be the causes or sources of their sufferings, a resentful and unforgiving spirit. Meekness and patience, though nearly related to each other, may be distinguished in this, that while the one describes the state of feeling towards the suffering itself, the other describes the disposition of the mind in reference to the cause of that suffering. It is not that moral callousness, that hardened stoicism which does not feel, but that noble self-possession of soul which would not avenge a wrong. It is the child, not of apathy, but of sympathy. It is not that conscious weakness which cannot resent, but that moral strength, ori-

ginating in compassion for others, which would not retaliate. The truly meek is the really magnanimous man.

So far as his sufferings seem to result from the arrangements of Providence, he feels that he is placed under a discipline which is adapted to educe the highest virtue. Not oblivious of the fact that he is under a system of law, and that he may not expect a constant miracle to be wrought on his special behalf, he still looks upon the sufferings, which flow from the ignorance or the disregard of these laws, as a Father's inflictions, and while not for the present joyous but grievous, they work out his real and permanent good. While learning to avoid what has brought upon him pain and anguish, he murmurs not, but confidingly leaves himself in the hands of Him who, he knows, is too wise to err, and too kind unnecessarily to chasten. He feels that his heaviest trials, his deepest privations, his bitterest disappointments, may work together for his truest welfare. The hotter the blast furnace, the purer the silver which it refines; so does he wish to come out of the furnace of affliction as seven times purified. Realising that the great Jehovah has a right to do with him as he pleases; that in the exercise of that right, he is ever guided by wisdom and righteousness, and influenced by benignity; that his severest suffering is infinitely less than his real desert; that God is rich in mercy, reconciling the world to himself, pleading with men to submit to the provision made for their salvation at such an infinite cost; realising, too, that it is but a small part of his ways that he can understand, the language of his heart is, 'The will of the Lord be done. It is the Lord—let him do what seemeth to him good—it is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed.'

But it is when his sufferings flow from the unkindness, the recklessness, the selfishness, or the malignity of his fellowmen, that meekness has most room for exercise, and that it is put to the severest test. His person may be attacked, his personal liberty may be assailed, and he needs meekness as the safeguard of his spirit, and the pledge of that calm and heroic endurance which is itself a power. His property may be taken from him, his character may be assailed by the weapons of calumny, the confidence of friendship may be abused, he may be outraged by the rude tongue of insult, the finger of scorn may point at him, and the ruthless heart of malice may pour out upon him its venom;

in such circumstances, how necessary that in meekness he should possess his soul: and to bear it all without a reproachful word, without a revengeful thought, without any of the feelings or symptoms of resentment,—this is the triumph of meekness.

Nor let it be imagined that it is impossible. Let a man contemplate how much he needs to be forgiven, let him think of the tendencies of his own spirit when unsubdued by infinite love, let him remember the forbearance that has been exercised toward himself, let him realise that his enemy is still his brother-man, and that he has a heart which even in its adamantine hardness may still be touched by generous conduct, above all, let him drink into the spirit of Jesus, and he will not find it so difficult as he supposed, heroically to endure, and magnanimously to forgive.

Well is the tendency of Christian truth to produce this disposition set forth, when Paul exhorts Christians to be gentle, showing all meekness to all men, for we ourselves, says he, also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after the kindness and love of God, our Saviour to man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Finding its highest exemplification in the conduct of Jesus, under accumulated sufferings and wrongs, it has had beautiful illustrations in the noble bearing of many of his disciples since in the hour of trial. It may be of use to give an illustration here as a kind of life picture which will make the idea more vivid than any language, and which will be a better answer to the question,—'What is meekness?' which my friend has so frequently asked in his writings, than any mere abstract description. A negro boy had come under the influence of the gospel and had believed it to his exceeding joy, and to the salvation of his soul. Full of gratitude to his Saviour, he delighted to hear the missionary preach about the glad tidings of mercy. One night his slave-master, disliking much that any of his slaves should become religious, lest they should get new notions of their position, and hearing that this little boy had 'been to meeting,' ordered him not to go, and threatened him with twenty-five lashes if he did. The slave,

after seeking help from Him who had given him the noblest freedom, determined to go, thinking that it was better to obey God than man. He accordingly went: and listened with eager joy to those truths which had elevated him, made him a new creature, and cheered his heart oftentimes before. In hearing of the love, the sufferings, the work of Jesus, he became prepared for the fiery trial that was before him. On his return, his master ascertained that the boy had disobeyed him; and ascertained it from the boy himself, for Christianity had taught him not to lie, even to save himself from suffering. The slaveholder at once ordered him to be lashed. After receiving twenty-five stripes, without a murmur or a groan, the master tauntingly asked—'And what can Jesus do for you now?' The boy gently answered, Jesus enables me to bear it all patiently. The tyrant enraged at the boy's calmness, ordered the 'driver' to give him twenty-five lashes more. When they had been inflicted, until the boy's back was all torn and bleeding, he repeated the taunting question,—'What can Jesus do for you now?' Unmurmuringly the boy replied, Jesus enables me to look forward to heaven. The monster more than ever enraged at the boy's strength of resolution, cursing and swearing, ordered him to be lashed again—to receive twenty-five lashes more. The little fellow was ready to sink and die, when his enraged persecutor again asked,—'What can Jesus do for you now?' The boy, lifting up his little black hands in the attitude of supplication, nobly replied,—Jesus enables me to pray for you, massa; sank down and breathed out his soul into the bosom of his God. That was meekness, and that is the spirit which the gospel inculcates and inspires.

Christ pronounces the meek happy. And are they not? Is there no happiness in the deep calm of a soul that cannot be ruffled by the most terrible storms of human rage—in the serenity of spirit in which, as in a mirror, the rude and the hating see the hideousness of their character—in the unbroken repose of a heart that is stayed upon God and truth—in the mind that, while it condemns the act, can weep over the guilty agent? Do we not all know that revenge is a demon that drinks up the very life-blood of man's happiness—that enmity in the heart, like the simoom of the desert, will in an hour wither up every plant of peace? Do we not know that resentment, like a scorching fire

burns to the very centre of man's heart, that under its influence a human being may become as wretched as it seems possible for man to be? Does not earth, with its bright and glowing scenes, its sunshine, its music, its stars, seem a desolate place to the man whose heart is full of the spirit of retaliation under injury? Though such a man may call those broad acres, those gorgeous palaces, those lovely lakes, those magnificent mountains, that heap of gold his, he can scarcely be said to inherit, for he does not enjoy them; while the poor cottager on his estate, who has learned the lesson of meekness at his Redeemer's feet, can go out into the broad and varied field of nature, and in no mean sense, regard it all as his Father's patrimony, and call it all his own.

But to perceive the full import of the reason which Christ assigns for their blessedness, it is necessary that we should remember what the Jews, who were hearing him, expected from the Messiah. In the materialism and narrowness of their views they had thought of his advent as the commencement of a career of conquest that would never cease till they were not only emancipated from the Roman yoke under which they had groaned, but raised as a nation to a position of ascendancy, if not absolute dominion, over the other kingdoms of the earth. They thought that the God-sent king would lead them forward to battle and to victory. As a people they longed for an opportunity of being avenged on their oppressors. They longed to inherit their own land. The fire of patriotism burned within them, but not unmixed with the deadly fire of revenge. In that state they could never enjoy the blessings of that glorious kingdom which he came to establish—a reign of righteousness, of truth, of benevolence, of peace in every human breast. They could never inherit the land of spiritual promise into which he sought to lead them. And, therefore, in his very first teachings, he seeks to disabuse their minds of all those false impressions which they so fondly cherished, and to show that it is not so much by a revolution without, as by a revolution in their own thoughts and principles, that they have to become heirs of that goodly land of privileges and spiritual blessings which is God's best dowry and man's highest birthright.

But the words of Christ may have a more pregnant meaning still, and may point to that glorious consummation in which we

shall have a new earth, the habitation of righteousness and of love, where war and strife shall be no more, where all will live under the peaceful sceptre of Messiah, where all the laws of man's highest nature will be fully developed, understood, and obeyed—where we shall live in happy and unbroken harmony. The meek shall then inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. They shall inherit the land and dwell therein for ever. Though Secularist teachers may tell us that men of this disposition will never inherit the earth, we doubt not the word of Christ; we believe that even now the meek enjoy the bright scenes of earth more than men under the influence of revengeful dispositions, and we believe they will do so more fully under the consummation of that kingdom which Christ came to establish and in which he himself will be Lord and King.

My friend does not admire the words which Christ addressed to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. He thinks they may mislead. He will, however, surely admit that Jesus did not deceive the people by teaching them that adherence to him and to his cause would bring upon them no suffering, no persecution, and that he did not, like many popular leaders, draw them into a position from which he himself recoiled. Nor would it be a wise and charitable conclusion, because he predicted the persecution frequently accompanying the confession of his name, that his religion is not a perfect antidote to the moral maladies of the world. Jesus called upon no one to follow him without counting the cost—without being prepared for obloquy and suffering so long as iniquity and selfishness prevailed. He reminded those who expected earthly honour and emoluments to flow from their connexion with the Messiah, that himself oftentimes found not where to lay his head. He asked some of his disciples, whose minds were not free from the old Jewish expectation of a glorious temporal kingdom, if they were able to be baptised with the baptism of agony and blood with which he was baptised. You surely cannot but admire the perfect honesty and ingenuousness of Jesus in revealing to them the immediate effect of the avowal of their principles on their social position. He did not encourage them to wait for a favourable opportunity of declaring their views openly and boldly; he told them, if they would be his disciples they must, without dread of the consequences, make an

open avowal, and that is more than Secularism does.* I know not how Mr Holyoake finds any ambiguity in the passage. It very clearly teaches the necessity of self-sacrifice in the cause of duty, and the honourableness of suffering for the cause of truth. To suffer for righteousness' sake, is manifestly to suffer for the belief and profession of Christianity, and for the performance of the duties which it requires. The term persecuted, is descriptive of all the variety of evils to which the followers of Christ were exposed for their allegiance to his authority, and their obedience of his laws. Read the history of the first apostles of Christianity, and of the formation of the primitive churches in the first centuries of the Christian era, and you will have some faint idea of their tribulations. They were imprisoned, beaten with rods, and stoned. They were often in weariness and painfulness, in watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings, in cold and nakedness. 'They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.' All contemporaneous history informs us that this is no exaggerated description of what many suffered.

True it is that not many of the Saviour's followers in these latter days have been exposed to persecution in so violent and fearful a form; still, I believe, it will be found, that the men who by earnest speech and holy lives have rebuked the iniquities of their times, have been exposed to the derision, reproach, and slander of some who were condemned by their purity and integrity. For myself, I mourn over the thought that the name of Christ, which is only another name for love, has been associated with persecution, for Christianity proclaims only an antagonism to sin, never to man—it is the enemy of sin, but the friend of humanity.

It is not every sufferer, nor every sufferer even for religion, that can claim the consolation which these words are so fitted to give. He only is thus blessed who suffers because he will not deny the truth. As Augustine says, 'It is not the punishment, but the cause,' and it might be added, the motive, that makes the martyr.

* 'We need the force of a party, especially for the sake of some who would resign public situations and proclaim their new opinions. As this course might involve important consequences, we cannot invite the sacrifice, unless we could make provision ourselves for those who make it.'—*Reasoner*, vol. xii.

The particular privilege which they enjoy is, not that theirs shall be, but that theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They already possess privileges and immunities, compared with which the highest honours, and the most exalted positions of earth are as the small dust in the balance; they are sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, they have a peace which passeth understanding; they rejoice in hope of the glory of God; they are a royal priesthood—all of them presenting to God in heart and life-worship, the sacrifices of praise — they are all kings—wearing the diadem of true holiness, and hoping soon to wear the crown of a glorious and glorified humanity that fadeth not away.

He tells them in spite of their persecution, to rejoice and be exceeding glad. These were prospects which were calculated to animate them. Their heaviest persecutions would work out an exceeding weight of glory. How much more enviable their position than that of their persecutors.

'Great is your reward.' In one point of view the blessedness of the future is a gift, in another point it is a reward; inasmuch as the measure of enjoyment depends upon the soul's capacity, and that again depends upon the faithfulness and the earnestness of service here.

Nor were they to think that they were alone in the great struggle. Prophets and martyrs of other ages were looking on. How must this have animated their confidence and excited their courage. Triumphant was the confidence, unwavering was the fortitude, which the gospel inspired. Who shall separate us, they could say, from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, was their triumphant language. Amid their sufferings they were sustained by the consciousness of sincerity, by the assurance of pardon, by the smile of God, by the hope of glory, and above all by his own presence and blessing.

Mr HOLYOAKE:—You heard Mr Rutherford remark, that whilst Christianity advised persons to maintain its principles in the face of worldly disadvantage, that is more than Secularism does. You observe that Mr Rutherford said that, but he did

not go on to tell you where Secularism ever said so, nor will he be able to point to any place where it has been said, nor any person who has given such advice. For myself and my colleagues I may say, there is not one of us prominent before the public in the advocacy of these opinions who has not been in prison for them, and who is not willing to go there again if you choose to inflict that upon us. My rev. friend might stand here and deliver speeches, like those with which he has favoured us, to the end of time, whilst I am liable to two years' imprisonment, by your Christian laws, for what I have said this very night. Which system, therefore, is it which justifies a manly utterance of opinion? Yours, which imprisons the man who differs from it, or mine, which counsels me, in spite of imprisonment, to stand here and utter my opinions to your face? Mr Rutherford has placed two terms, utterly distinct, together, and has consequently confused himself and his audience—he has taken *revenge* as the antithesis of *meekness*. Now I have no idea of giving praise to revenge. The opposite of meekness is not revenge: meekness is a servile feeling, and revenge is a base one; but there is another feeling opposed to meekness, and that is bravery; and if the meek inherit the earth, it will be because the brave have gone before them resisting evil, and making the earth a proper place for them to dwell in. He says truly enough that Christ foretold the persecution which his followers would meet with from the enunciation of their opinions. My objection is, not that Christ did not foretell the persecution, but that he told his disciples what was not true—that they would be blessed in persecution. He said they were blessed when persecuted—a very different thing from simply foretelling persecution. The blessedness has not been proved, and cannot be proved. Mr Rutherford has referred you to the discussion between Mr Grant and myself. Had he remembered what he had read there, he would have known that the argument on eternal punishments—the only possible defence which can be made—was dealt with there. Mr Grant made a parallel between the judgments of a human and the eternal judge—reference being made to the civil magistrate, whom it was urged we should not charge with error, notwithstanding the severity of his sentences. I told him that with the judgments of Lord Campbell, for instance, I agreed; but it was overlooked

that the magistrate merely administers the laws of society in self-defence. What would be said of the judge, if he were almighty and all-wise, and had made the animal whom he condemned, and placed him in a world where he knew he would be tempted, and left him when he knew he would fall? Against the judge who should thus condemn, our moral indignation would rise, and we should re-judge the judgment. This matter stands where it has long stood, and where it will have to stand until the good sense of mankind shall abolish such defences. In order to make man perfect we must have a congruous system of morality. If there be a God, his attributes will be an infinite enlargement of all our best affections—if we are to profit by the contemplation of Deity, Deity must be an infinite enlargement of magnanimity and generosity—man must be taught to be generous by learning that God himself is generous—we must teach men forgiveness by telling them that God himself will forgive; and thus you will address to them a powerful, because a congruous argument. Mr Rutherford tells me God *has* loved the world, but he answers in the wrong tense. I don't want to know, at this point of the argument, whether he has loved the world, but whether at the day of judgment of which you speak, he will *then* love the world. I want to know whether you say it is a proper thing that Christ on earth should tell us to love our enemies, to bless them that persecute us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and then, when he comes to pronounce sentence on mankind, act upon entirely different principles. I wish to see congruity in moral sentiment—to find an infinite enlargement and illustration of it in God, and then erring and revengeful man, remembering that God is capable of boundless forgiveness, will learn to forgive his brother, as he expects to be forgiven. I was interested in the affecting anecdote which Mr Rutherford told us of the boy who, in violation of his master's command, went to hear the missionary preach; but he forgot to add that the boy broke also one of the commands of Christ, who said if any man ask thee to go one mile, go with him twain—if thou art smitten on one cheek, turn the other also. Did the boy do that when, in violation of his master's orders, he went to hear the missionary preach? I point this out not to imply that the boy ought not to have gone, but to show that if you adhere

to the strict words of Christ, you are hampered at every turn, and can do nothing for humanity or progress. If you say that the boy behaved nobly (and I grant you he did) in praying for, and forgiving him who had inflicted so much suffering upon him, I ask you which is the nobler philosophy, that which teaches you how to endure, or that which teaches you how to redress? You call that man a monster, declare that he did violence to humanity, and say that slavery is a horrible thing; but has not Christ said, with all the authority of his great name, that we are not to resist evil? Then you cannot put down the monster slavery by the Bible, or prevent masters from flogging their slaves until they groan and die. That is one reason why I protest against the precepts of Christ. I do not adopt this course for the purpose of being on the opposite side to my friend, or wounding your feelings, but we know, that from one end of America to the other, Christian churches justify slavery, and that the maxim, resist not evil, is the right arm of that pernicious system. Professor Newman says, in the book from which I have already quoted, in manly words, that slavery has the authority of the Bible-God for its maintenance, and we cannot quote the Bible against the slave-holders of America. It cannot be done honestly, and therefore we seek the right of re-judging those moral precepts, of saying, when we are told not to resist evil, that there must be some ambiguity in the precept, and that our instruction ought rather to be, resist evil, wisely, intelligently, resolutely and effectively. I pass by what Mr Rutherford was pleased to say of affliction, of the soul-purification and sundry other advantages resulting therefrom, because few people are willing to believe that is the best way of reforming mankind. The physicians are in league against the doctrine that affliction comes from heaven; our sanitary reformers protest against it, and a Board sits at Swydir House to contradict it. We make the best of that which is inevitable, and endeavour to improve that which we cannot help; but no man in these days will contend that disease is to be regarded as coming from heaven, or affliction as, in any sense, a religious ordinance. As humble, erring creatures we strive to improve mankind, not by inflicting suffering, but by giving them intelligence, putting them in a better sphere, and enabling them to rectify their own condition. The Christian

doctrine is reformation by affliction; we want reformation by instruction, and a wise application of the principles of causation. I, however, pass by much that has been said, and will come to Mr Rutherford's explanation of the case of the young man who came to Christ. Mr Rutherford said, if money was the idol which the young man worshipped, Christ did right to rebuke him; but this 'if' is his own invention, for there is no authority for saying such was the case. The narrative is thus given: 'Jesus said unto him, Thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross and follow me.' Had Christ said, sell part of that which thou hast, reserve something for thyself, there would have been reason in that, and he would still have found out whether the young man worshipped money. I undertake to say, were the same command given to Mr Rutherford—were he told to sell all that he had and give it to the poor, he too would go away sorrowful.

I must briefly say that the reference we have had to the reconcilement of texts brings us the key to the controversy of this evening. I am told to look at texts and to reconcile them. Mr Rutherford might have answered me (apparently) more effectually than he has done. I could have answered myself more to the point, I think, by saying that whilst Christ said, take no thought for the morrow, one of his apostles said, be diligent in business; that if Christ exhorted us not to resist evil, he also told us to overcome evil with good—so that thus the second sentence saves the first. Christians call that reconciling the Scriptures; it is no reconcilement whatever. They say it is simply explaining one passage by another, but honestly it is *substituting* one for the other—you take one and leave the other; in plainer language, you accept the one and disbelieve the other. You go to Paul, because he tells you to be diligent in business, and you know that to be a useful and wholesome maxim; you go to Christ, where he says nobly and justly, overcome evil with good—the

one directing activity, and the other teaching you how to resist evil in the wisest and most effective manner. But how do you come to the conclusion? My friend says, look at the contexts. Do you mean to say that in a book coming from God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and proceeding from infinite wisdom, we are obliged to look at contexts to ascertain the meaning? What is that but to admit that the language is not perfect, that it is not the language of inspiration, that in accuracy of expression it is inferior to many scientific, and other books of mere human origin? Mark, permit me (and it is for that I plead) to take what seems to me good and wholesome, to cleave to that which appeals to my moral sense, throws a light on my path, and will make me a better and wiser man; and to disregard those parts which can neither be explained, justified, nor reconciled, and then I will take the Bible, thankful for the instruction which it affords. All I claim is permission to take those portions (and I allow there are such) which are wholesome and moral, rejecting those which, in my conscience, I believe are not so.

Mr RUTHERFORD:—A good deal has been said about the passage,—'Resist not evil.' We are assured that the precept cannot be obeyed without the most disastrous results to human liberty and progress; that, if obeyed, it would keep the oppressed under the yoke of tyranny, and leave the oppressor to carry out his designs unchecked. We are told that, though it stands in the Christian statute-book, no one ever thinks of obeying it; and this is regarded as a certain evidence of its impracticability. Now, it will be well that we examine the preceding context, that we may find out the precept to which it stands in contrast. If we can discover the affirmative of which it is the negative, we shall be able at once to ascertain its meaning, and to perceive its limitations. 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.' The Scribes and Pharisees, misapplying a law enacted for the guidance of the civil magistrate, under the Mosaic economy, taught the rightfulness of retaliation. Christ, on the contrary, utterly condemned it, and, with indefinite generality, laid down a principle for the

guidance of his disciples when subjected to violence. The moral system prevalent among the Jews at that period sanctioned retaliation. Christ inculcated non-retaliation. The Jewish moral teachers did not object to a private individual's taking the law into his own hand, and revenging his injuries. Christ taught that it was better rather to suffer wrong than privately to avenge it. The precepts of the Scribes and Pharisees fostered a spirit equally prejudicial to individual happiness, and to the best interests of society. Christ inculcated a spirit of forbearance which would be a source of serenity to its possessor, and which would be likely to conquer enmity. Wherever the honour of God, the welfare of the community, and the dictates of conscience did not require it, injury should be borne, and not resisted, as the best way of disarming an enemy. In matters, not involving a sacrifice of principle, Christ instructs his disciples to yield rather than to resist. The cases supposed in the illustration of the precept, clearly indicate this. There is nothing in it to sanction connivance at wrong, either moral, social, or political; nothing to prevent the most strenuous efforts for the removal of every kind of evils. It teaches us to avoid retaliation, it forbids our cherishing a revengeful spirit. If you pay no attention to the context, you may have some ground for your objections; but when you consider the precept to which that of Christ stands in opposition, you must feel that these objections have no foundation whatever. We may cherish a spirit of forgiveness towards those who injure us, and yet value the rights and liberties of our fellowmen; we may return good for evil, and still be the friends of freedom, and the advocates of the oppressed. Mr Holyoake gives us no good reason for receiving his version; and in ours, we find nothing to hinder us from putting forth all the energies of our being to sweep away everything that afflicts, degrades, and oppresses humanity. The question is as to the best means of its removal. Will the spirit of revenge do more than the spirit of forgiveness? Who will labour most successfully in the great work of human deliverance—those who are the slaves of their passions, or those who have conquered themselves? He who has learnt calmly and manfully to bear evil, will achieve a far greater victory over it, than he who struggles with it in the excitement of passion

and the fury of revenge. It is not in the paroxysm of rage that the oppressed gain any real and lasting triumph over the oppressor. Has it not often happened that the nation which has risen up to achieve its liberties by mere brute force, though it may for a season have gained its object, has relapsed into its former condition, and has even been more fearfully crushed under the iron heel of despotism than before? And why? Because it had not learnt that it is not the weapon of mere brute force that strikes terror into the tyrant's heart, but the weapon of truth; and that calm and patient endurance will often shake a throne which has stood unmoved amid the fiercest assaults of physical strength. When the appeal is to brute force despotism may triumph, as it has often done; but when you bring it to the tribunal of enlightened reason, it is shorn of its power. Ere the world is freed from the grasp of tyranny, peoples must learn to trust more in the force of truth and in the dignity of virtue, than in the bayonets of soldiers. And must Christianity be charged with sanctioning oppression, because it does not advocate a physical resistance, though it teaches those great truths and principles, which alone can secure real freedom to the world? Mr Holyoake tells us that the slaveholder finds in the New Testament a sanction for his position, and that he may appeal from those who would abolish slavery to the precept of Christ — 'Resist not evil.' With what right, I ask, can he appeal to this passage? Because it teaches us how to act under injuries, does it sanction the perpetration of evil? Because it condemns retaliation, does it smile upon cruelty? Because it would breathe into the slave the spirit of heroic endurance, does it encourage the tyrant in the arts of oppression? What right has he to appeal to the New Testament at all? Does not the entire spirit of Christianity condemn him? Did not Christ ever show himself the friend of the down-trodden, the suffering, and the poor? Did not his severest denunciations fall upon those who oppressed the people? If men believed and lived under the influence of the great truths which he taught, would not slavery of every kind be for ever impossible? The slaveholder may find shelter in the teachings of Secularism, but never in Christianity. You tell him that the man whom he holds in bondage, is only a lump of organised matter—that there is no

immortality before him, that he is but little removed from the beasts of the field, and that his destiny is not nobler than theirs—that the Author of his being is not interested in him—that there will be no future vindication of his rights, and no retribution for his wrongs; and if the tyrant can believe your teachings, they will prove a quietus to his conscience, and a sedative to his fears. Under the influence of such dogmas, he would not soon relax his grasp of the bondsman, or break his fetters; and could they be supported by evidence, they would suit him admirably, and afford him unmingled gratification. But let me go to him, and, in the name of Christianity, assure him that the man whom he treats as a chattel, has a spiritual nature, has been created in the image of God, and for a noble destiny; that he will survive the dissolution of the material universe, and live for ever; that his mind is capable of everlasting progression in knowledge, in benevolence, and virtue; that God loves him, and is infinitely interested in his salvation; that the greatest conceivable sacrifice has been made for the expiation of his guilt, and the renovation of his nature; that the Eternal Spirit seeks to restore him to the Divine favour and image; and that all heaven would rejoice in his emancipation from the dominion of sin and of fear—let me proclaim to him these great verities of our religion, and if he truly believes them, the fetters of his slaves will be broken at once, and for ever. Nothing could bring a severer condemnation of his previous position, nothing could present a higher motive to the immediate emancipation of his slaves. Were the genial principles of Christianity universally diffused and embraced, slavery and every other form of despotism would be impossible. The religion of Christ is the unchanging and eternal enemy of selfishness, and all its horrid progeny; for it teaches us the golden rule to do to others as we would that others should do unto us. The spread of these principles will do more to advance the cause of freedom than the power of mighty armies. There are many cases, in which the most inconsiderate will admit that it is highly important not to attempt to resist evil by physical force, in which the solemn and bold avowal of truth, with a calm and passive attitude, will tell far more powerfully upon the tyrant's position, than any other influence that you can bring to bear upon him. If you attempt

by brute force to overturn his throne, he may crush you by the very weapons which you employ, and retain his position for many a year; but if you enlighten the people, you exert a power against him which he can never meet, and which, however slowly, will eventually sap the foundations of his government. Teachers and martyrs have done more to achieve the liberties of nations than battalions of armed men; and Christianity has raised up a noble band of teachers and of martyrs for the world. Whatever Mr Holyoake may say to the contrary, it provides not only for the xpiation of man's sin, but for his instruction, enlightenment, and reformation. In the past history of the world there is evidence that it has enlightened, reformed, and elevated men in thousands and millions of instances. That fearful, moral, social, and political evils have existed side by side with it, only proves that it has not been universally received, or that, where it has been admitted in form, its spirit has not been imbibed. That the world has not long ere now under its influence become a paradise we owe to the opposition of its enemies, and the inconsistency of its professed friends, but not to its want of adaptation, or of moral power. No one can be said to have experimentally tested Christianity unless he has submitted his heart and life fully to its influence; and no nation has experimentally tested it, until each unit of its population has believed its truth. When this is accomplished, you will have a nation of the noblest freemen, among whom no system of oppression or corruption can flourish for a single day. In proportion as any people approximate to this state of things the tenure of the tyrant's power will be uncertain and brief. If you enlighten the masses, if you lead them to realise that they are men, and not things, that they have spiritual and immortal natures as much as the greatest potentates of earth, that they are under the government of a Being whose wisdom, justice, and benevolence are infinite, that they have been created to find their supreme happiness in the enjoyment of his smile, that they may be entirely freed from sin and from fear, that they may rise to the true dignity of man in becoming partakers of the Divine nature and heirs of a noble destiny; if you leaven the public mind with these glorious truths, you lay a foundation for the liberties of a people which no revolution can shake, you arrest the grasping selfishness of ambition, and the reckless march of tyranny. And

Christianity teaches all these truths, and breathes the spirit of universal emancipation. Never till it prevails, will despotism be abolished. Never till men live under its benign influence shall we see truth triumph over error, liberty over oppression, and righteousness over iniquity. Taking the individual man it breaks the fetters of his soul and thus aims at the deliverance of a whole community from all the evils that afflict it. If the revolution which it promises, comes not in a moment, with pomp and circumstance, it is none the less glorious and sure. If you can succeed in persuading any one to believe the gospel, and to live under the influence of its teachings, its motives and its precepts, you introduce him into the most blessed freedom—the freedom of his reason from the dominion of the senses, of his judgment from the thraldom of his passions, of his spirit from the corruption of sin, and from the dread of death. 'He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides.' These are the men who are the chief pillars of a people's liberties, and Christianity in providing them and in imparting to them moral strength, provides the best safeguard of national, political, and social freedom.

I leave it with this audience to judge whether Mr Holyoake has substantiated the statement that some of Christ's teachings are ambiguous and impracticable. If time allowed us to review the whole of them, I do not think we could find one that is not capable of a clear and simple explanation, that could not be understood by those to whom they were originally addressed, and that is not pregnant with instruction to ourselves. Nor is it difficult to show that men may easily practice the precepts of Christ if they are only willing. We are still told that the morality of the New Testament is defective, but we are not favoured with that more perfect standard of morality with which we may compare it. The pure moralism for which Secularism contends we know only by name, we have not yet heard what it is. May we not hope that this debate will not close without a full exposition of it? I suppose it is reserved for the last night of our discussion; and then we shall be able to compare it with Christian morality, and see which it will be better for the world to have. We may, however, be certain that the moralism which has for its formation the dogma of justification by organ-

isation and circumstances, is a mere name, and can never deserve the confidence of men.

You do not wish our missionaries to go to heathen lands to preach the gospel. You would have us to believe that their labours are superfluous and ineffective. You desiderate the teaching of philosophy rather than the teaching of theology. You prefer 'Combe's Constitution of Man' to the Bible. You wish these self-denying men to teach art, and science, and morality, but to leave out Christianity. Why, then, do you not yourselves organise a mission to the heathen? Our missionaries have gone to them with the doctrines of the Cross, and education, civilisation, and science have followed in their train. Under the genial influence of Christianity, a pure and beautiful morality has sprung up among peoples, who, for ages, have been devoted to the most debasing superstitions, and sunk in the deepest degradation. In believing the gospel, men of the fiercest passions and of the most sensual natures have been elevated, and have become pure and happy. You may find a system of morality correct and clear enough, which, when tested by experience, is found altogether incapable of moving and renovating a human mind. Now, the glory of Christianity is, that it not only teaches the highest morality, but that it presents the highest motives to goodness, and secures the moral elevation of all who really believe its truths. This is a point of the greatest importance. I may be permitted an illustration. I know a gentleman moving in a respectable sphere, who, according to his own confession, had lived up to his thirty-fifth year in selfishness and sin. One day he told me that he felt utterly miserable. He had made many and strenuous efforts to break the chains of sinful habit that bound him, but without any success. He despaired of ever being delivered from his degrading and appalling condition. It was not merely the load of past guilt that crushed his spirit; but the dread of remaining for ever a slave of sin. The simple gospel of God's love to guilty souls was presented to him. I showed him from the Bible that he was at once welcome, through the great sacrifice of the Divine Redeemer, to enjoy the pardon of all his sins, and to call God his Father. I showed him that he might find moral strength in the sympathy and aid of the Holy Spirit, through the great fact that Jesus was a Saviour for him. He believed the truth, entered

into peace, and from that day, according to his own testimony, gained a victory over his evil habits and selfish desires. He has now for five years, by his consistency, benevolence, and purity, been a living witness of the power of the gospel to save from sin. It has blessed him, and he has become a blessing to others. Now, Mr Holyoake frankly admits that he knows of no cure like this for natures unfortunately constituted and evilly placed. Secularism, then, has no power to produce a moral revolution in the soul, and to give it power to triumph over the temptations which lie in its path. We are given to understand that Mrs Manning could not have acted otherwise than she did in murdering her victim, unless she had been forcibly restrained or innocuously placed. Secularist preceptive teaching, it is admitted, could have had no power over such a nature, and society could be saved from the effects of her passions only by physical restraint. Christianity, however, places men under restraint of a very different kind; it gives them dominion over themselves; it enables them to resist sin, and leads them onward to happiness and virtue. There are thousands of men all over the world, and there are many here to-night, who know in their experience that the gospel purifies the heart and saves from sin even under the most unfavourable circumstances. This is the great, broad question, which we should consider—Is Christianity not adapted to purify and elevate man? Has it not produced the most glorious moral effects? Does it not present the loftiest motives to benevolence and virtue?

Mr Holyoake always speaks as if man's ruin must be traced to God, as if man were only to be pitied in the misery which he brings upon himself by sin, and as if it could not be righteous in God to punish him for the violation of his law. He may tell us that God has made man's nature and circumstances, but let him not forget that that nature is morally free—that there is strength for him to overcome the greatest temptations—that even after his sin, God has made the greatest conceivable sacrifice for his salvation—that where the remedy is proclaimed to him, he can perish only by wilfully rejecting it—and that the heart of infinite love yearns over him, even when he chooses wrath. The words of Christ are the out-breathings of that heart—'O that thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.'

THIRD NIGHT'S DEBATE.

SUBJECT (Proposed by Mr Holyoake).—'*Some of Christ's Teachings are Disastrous; and his Example, especially in respect to his Death, wanted force of Intellectual Character.*' *

Mr JOHN BENSON presided over the large assembly this evening, pursuant to appointment.

The CHAIRMAN said: In appearing before you as the president of this evening, I have only to ask a continuance of that forbearance which you exercised on the two preceding evenings. I am glad to understand that the proceedings hitherto have done credit to 'canny Newcastle;' and I hope that course of conduct will still continue. The subject of debate is: 'Some of Christ's teachings are disastrous; and his example, especially in respect of his death, wanted force of intellectual character.' According to the arrangement of the joint committee, the first speaker I have to announce is Mr Holyoake.

Mr HOLYOAKE:—Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to preface this debate with one remark. The small placards state that the nett proceeds arising out of the admission to these meetings shall be given to institutions of this town; personally I had much rather Mr Rutherford had taken the surplus himself, appropriating it to the building of his own church or the furtherance of his own

* The general proposition was thus expressed: 'Is the character of Jesus Christ, as a whole, a useful model for imitation in these days, and do his precepts contain the purest morality?' What the chairman read was Mr Holyoake's proposition, maintained in disproof of this.

opinions. Christians frequently object to assist us in the propagation of our opinions; I have no objection to give every facility to those who differ from me in the publication of their opinions, for I cannot see that I have any right because I disagree with the opinions of any man, equally conscientious with myself, to put any obstacle in the way of their diffusion. If such appropriation is not made, I should like the proceeds to be given to the missionary fund for the support of the Rev. Brewin Grant, whom you have had here. I say this for the purpose of indicating that that gentleman contrives to make Christianity so disagreeable wherever he goes, that he has, I think, explained and does illustrate what is practically to be gathered from the gospel which he expresses. I do think he fairly illustrates passages to be found there in abundance, and it must be useful in all discussions of religious truth that somebody should personally illustrate the (I was going to say) savage parts of holy writ as well as the gentler and more humane.

If this audience look at Secularism, they will find that it is neither carping, cavilling, nor fault-finding in its spirit; it seeks positive moral truth, and it will not be content with a miracle when it wants a sound precept, nor will it be satisfied with a prophecy when it wants a proof. An able writer described four years ago the new features of freethinking which Mr Rutherford has much overlooked. That writer stated, and it may be useful to repeat it in your hearing, that 'the language of unbelief has hitherto been (but is not now) that inspiration is not infallible, that miracles cannot prove a divine revelation, that there are no innate ideas, that truth exists only in relation to the gospel, that the apostles were either enthusiasts or deceivers, that the church is not what it pretends to be or what the world has taken it for—all these things were taught by ordinary sceptics, together with the respectable names of Locke and Hobbes; but it is of comparatively little use to fight Christianity in pitched battles—its evidence does not consist in this or that detail; the proof of single facts, even the fact of the resurrection, may be destroyed, the Bible may have holes picked in it; not even common people disregard these things—men take the gospel as a whole, they have neither the time nor opportunity to master each question, as that about the two genealogies. Not only is it a refinement in

cruelty, but a waste of time to kill the enemy by inches; it wants a bolder, larger, more chivalrous strategy than that.' The new course demanded by the progress of the times, fair to the subject and just to the multitude, is to try Christianity by *moral* tests. The right to do this Professor Newman has stated in his chapter on 'Bigotry and Progress,' in his 'Phases of Faith,'—a book to which I before referred as being one of the most remarkable which the religious controversies of this age have produced. I am about to read from the new edition published in Chapman's 'Library for the People,' which any person can have for 2s. The Professor states, in the opening of the chapter, the argument justifying the moral treatment of which I have ventured to avail myself. 'If any Christian reader,' he says, 'has been patient enough to follow me thus far, I now claim that he will judge my argument and me, as before the bar of God, and not by the conventional standards of the Christian churches. Morality and truth are principles in human nature both older and more wide-spread than Christianity or the Bible; and neither Jesus nor James, nor John nor Paul, could have addressed or did address men in any other tone than that of claiming to be themselves judged by some pre-existing standard of moral truth, and by the inward powers of the hearer. Does the reader deny this? or, admitting it, does he think it impious to accept their challenge? Does he say that we are to love and embrace Christianity, without trying to ascertain whether it be true or false? If we say yes—such a man has no love or care for truth, and is but by accident a Christian. He would have remained a faithful heathen, had he been born in heathenism, though Moses, Elijah, and Christ preached a higher truth to him. Such a man is condemned by his own confession, and I here address him no longer. I ought to say that I care only to object to the moral precepts of Christ—not so much to his character, for it is perhaps better to subject his precepts alone to examination, since they may be good although his character may be defective, and his precepts may be erroneous, although his personal character may be perfect. But we are obliged to consider the character of Christ, because it is held up as a perfect example in all respects to men in all time.' As I could not refer Mr Rutherford to the particular texts upon which my objections could be founded, but only

the narratives of the death of Christ on the whole, I trust I may be permitted to state such objections as the time permits to that part of the subject which was read second on the announcement of the topics of this evening; and here I must ask you all, and my friend, Mr Rutherford, in particular, to dismiss from your minds all scriptural texts, Evangelical or Morisonian theories, as to the vicarious or other mission of Christ; you must consider the narrative as if you read it in Homer's Iliad or the Turkish Koran. I shall first quote one or two passages from Professor Newman's chapter on the Moral Perfection of Jesus. You will understand that at the point where I shall read, the Professor takes up the proceedings of Christ about the time of his crucifixion, and he is speaking of him not in an irreverential spirit—not with the desire to wound the feelings of any person. He says to the reader in effect, 'If you are not prepared for the investigation, lay down the book, and go no further; I write with reluctance, but I am challenged to declare my opinions and objections, and to others attach the consequences of my reply.' Understand me, therefore, as reading this in the same spirit, considering Christ just as I should consider Rousseau, Socrates, or any other person who was held up as an example either on the side of Paganism or Scepticism. 'The time arrived at last,' writes the Professor, 'when Jesus felt that he must publicly assert Messiahship, and this was certain to bring things to an issue. I suppose him to have hoped that he was Messiah, until hope and the encouragement given to him by Peter and others grew into a persuasion strong enough to act upon, but not always strong enough to still misgivings. I say, I suppose this; but I build nothing on my supposition. I, however, see that when he had resolved to claim Messiahship publicly, one of two results was inevitable, if that claim was ill-founded—viz., either he must have become an impostor in order to screen his weakness; or he must have retracted his pretensions amid much humiliation, and have retired into privacy to learn sober wisdom. From these alternatives there was escape only by death, and upon death Jesus purposely rushed. All Christendom has always believed that the death of Jesus was voluntarily incurred; and unless no man ever became a wilful martyr, I cannot conceive why we are to doubt the fact concerning Jesus. When he re-

solved to go up to Jerusalem, he was warned by his disciples of the danger; but so far was he from being blind to it, that he distinctly announced to them that he knew he should suffer in Jerusalem the shameful death of a malefactor. On his arrival in the suburbs, his first act was ostentatiously to ride into the city on an ass's colt in the midst of the acclamations of the multitude, in order to exhibit himself as having a just right to the throne of David. Thus he gave a handle to imputations of intended treason. He next entered the temple courts, where doves and lambs were sold for sacrificing, and committed a breach of the peace by flogging with a whip those who trafficked in the area. By such conduct he undoubtedly made himself liable to legal punishment, and probably might have been publicly scourged for it, had the rulers chosen to indicate their vengeance. But he "meant to be prosecuted for treason, not for felony," to use the words of a modern offender. He therefore commenced the most exasperating attacks on all the powerful, calling them hypocrites and whited sepulchres, and vipers' brood, and denouncing upon them the "condemnation of hell!" He was successful. He had both urged the rulers up to the point of thirsting for his life, and given colour to the charge of political rebellion. He resolved to die, and he died. Had his enemies contemptuously let him live, he would have been forced to act the part of Jewish Messiah, or renounce Messiahship. . . . Does my friend deny that the death of Jesus was wilfully incurred? The orthodox not merely admit, but maintain it. Their creed justifies it by the doctrine that his death was a "sacrifice" so pleasing to God as to expiate the sins of the world. This honestly meets the objections to self-destruction; for how better could life be used than by laying it down for such a prize? But besides all other difficulties in the very idea of atonement, the orthodox creed startles us by the incredible conception that a voluntary sacrifice of life should be unacceptable to God unless offered by ferocious and impious hands. If Jesus had "authority from the Father to lay down his life," was he unable to stab himself in the desert, or the sacred altar of the Temple, without involving guilt to any human being? Did he, who is at once "High Priest" and victim, when "offering up himself" and "presenting his own blood unto God," need any justification for using the sacrificial knife? The ortho-

dox view more clearly and unshrinkingly avows, that Jesus deliberately goaded the wicked rulers into the deeper wickedness of murdering him; but on the view that Jesus was *no* sacrifice, but only a model man, his death is an unrelieved calamity. Nothing but a long and complete life could possibly test the fact of his perfection; and the longer he lived the better for the world.'*

You have in that argument the statement I have sought to place before you, that the bearing of Christ intellectually was not such as is calculated for our imitation. Did time permit I should object to his silence towards Pilate when Pilate said to him, 'What is truth?' The narrative indeed says that Pilate went out, but if Christ had delivered an answer when an answer was required, doubtless we should have had it on record; and how much of disputation would it have saved, had Christ explicitly answered so noble and useful a question! Then, again, when Herod, who was interested about Christ and wished to see him and to know his views, sought in his anxiety to speak to him, he maintained his silence, and refused to make any communication. Christ alleged with reference to the rulers and the Jews, that they would not regard him, neither be convinced by him, hence his silence; but this I submit is not the course which any of us would have followed under similar circumstances. He who spoke as never man spake before, was surely able to present such a case respecting his own position, his own mission, his object here, the intellectual character of the gospel he had to preach, as would have penetrated to the understandings of those perfectly willing to hear what he had to say in his own justification. I object also that Christ cannot be a model for us in many respects, because his life was not like ours. When you say I am to judge of Christ's conduct and bearing as an example, it is right to ask whether you mean what you say, and will abide by the purport of the words, because if you do, I may compare the career of Christ with the career of working men in this day. Did Christ ever laugh? There is no record that he ever did. Was he ever sick? Were the world's joys or sorrows shared by him as by ourselves? Did Christ ever struggle with the world's wrongs as men do in our day? We are told, indeed, that he was a carpenter, but what kind of a master had he

* Phases of Faith. Chapman's 'Library for the People.'

—what wages had he,—were they adequate or inadequate? Did he ever work in a mill? Was he ever on strike? Was he ever married? Did he know what it was to have nine children to support on 15s. a week? (Hisses, followed by applause.) It seems profane to speak thus. But can he be aught but a vague example, who had no special experience applicable to the poor of our day? You challenge an inquiry. It must be personal, or it is nothing. Christ can only be an example to those whose career was like his own. If he was not tried as we are tried, tempted as we are tempted, if he only experienced one form of life, and that not ours, if he was not subject to the peculiar privations of people of this day, then he is no example for *us*, and being differently situated, we have to seek other and different guidance. And the reason why I urge this is, that we claim the right of looking over the crowded fields of biography, and of looking for examples among human beings who shall be examples to us. If you were to say that Christ was an example to the people of his own time under the circumstances in which they lived, I should be content; but your claim is prouder, your demand more urgent and presumptuous. Not content with this, you say that Christ in his personal history, is a model to men of all times; and I allege that no human being could be a model for all men in all time, because no one human being can participate in all human conditions, and struggle with all human temptations.

I argue that Christ's character wanted force and intellectuality, because all we learn from his narrative is the example of a person who, with very great meekness and endurance, submitted to his fate; but a strong man intellectually might have baffled that fate. There is no reason (looking honestly at what he did) why we should not suppose that his death could have been avoided. You think because Christ died for mankind that is the greatest thing he could have done. Have you forgotten that hundreds and thousands of men before the days of Christ cheerfully and nobly died to save their country or serve posterity? A thousand men have died for their country, for one man who has been its great teacher or its great intellectual deliverer. I submit that we did not want in that age, nor do we want now, people to die for us; we want people to instruct us; and if Christ,

instead of being the greatest of Jews and the greatest of sufferers, had made himself the greatest of men who ever illumined this world by divine wisdom—if he had taught us all that, as God, he might have taught us—if he had exercised a proud intellectual dominion—if he had delivered his arguments in a clear, searching, and convincing manner—if he had mastered all judgments by a manifestation of the highest intellectual development; if, for instance, Christ had been to that age what Lord Bacon was to a later, and Shakspeare who in song fathomed the depths of the human heart and chastened human passions, I need not say how different the world would have been to what it is now. You must permit the comparison between what Christ did and what we may imagine might have been done by one who received his instruction and inspiration from God. From what errors might he have saved us, from what calamities delivered us! This is altogether irrelevant, except on the supposition that here our inquiry is an honest and personal one. As to the example which Christ presents in the eye of reason, viewing him as a human being—held up by the churches and Mr Rutherford not as a model for imitation in reference to his day, but as an instance of human perfection for all men to contemplate, I will close with a brief illustration. A modern poet, Mr Alexander Smith, has thus spoken of one faculty—that of love. I will read you his brief lines to show you that if we had had exemplifications of this kind given, with all the power which Christ was capable of, how different a gospel we might have had—

'Love is a sea
Filling all the abysses dim
Of lornest space, in whose deeps regally
Suns and their bright broods swim.

All things have something more than barren use;
There is a scent upon the briar,
A tremulous splendour in the autumn dews—
Cold morns are fringed with fire:

The clodded earth goes up in sweet-breathed flowers;
In music dies poor human speech,
And into beauty blow those hearts of ours,
When Love is born in each.

Life is transfigured in the soft and tender
Light of love, as a volume dim
Of rolling smoke becomes a wreathed splendour
In the declining sun.

Daisies are white upon the churchyard sod,
Sweet tears, the clouds lean down and give.
This world is very lovely. O my God,
I thank Thee that I live.

There is no evil in the present strife;
From the shivering seal's low moans,
Up through the shining tiers and ranks of life,
To stars upon their thrones.

The seeming ills are Loves in dim disguise;
Dark moral knots, that pose the seer,
If *we* are lovers in our wider eyes,
Shall hang like dew-drops clear.

God! what a glorious future gleams on me;
With nobler senses, nobler peers,
I'll wing me through creation like a bee,
And taste the gleaming spheres.

While some are trembling o'er the poison-cup,
While some grow lean with care, some weep,
In this luxurious faith I'll wrap me up,
As in a robe, and sleep.'

If we look at the sentiments which these lines convey as to what love might have done in this world, and then turn to the speech of Christ upon the cross, to which my friend will doubtless refer, you will see what a wonderful contrast there is between the intellectual character of Christ even in his last moments, who addressed God from whom forgiveness had to be invoked, and that which he might have exerted, and which I think he ought to have exerted. My time is now expired. I only ask that you will consider the matter purely in the light of an inquiry made on the plane of human reason. My friend will be good enough to draw this distinction for using the language and assumptions of Scripture. I know an answer may be given to everything that I have said. If we assume Christ to be God, having a divine mission, there is an end of argument; but if you say Christ's career, as recorded by the Evangelists, even down to the point of his death, is an example to us, then I say that if any man were to attempt to imitate even the most solemn and

purest parts of his career, you would find fault with him, and rebuke him for a want of proper dignity and respect. We seek the right to take the best parts of the character of Christ—his goodness, love, merciful disposition, patience, long-suffering—we take those features and dwell on them; and we reject those parts which we find not suitable as an example to us, and not capable of being recommended, on the ground of human reason, to our fellow-men.

Mr RUTHERFORD:—In reference to the proposition which Mr Holyoake has made, for the disposal of the surplus proceeds of this discussion, if any, I may say, that I think it best to abide by your original arrangement, and leave the matter entirely in the hands of our committee. Before proceeding to the consideration of the proper subject of this night's debate, it may be useful to review the objections urged against the moral precepts of Christ. Mr Holyoake took the position that if God had spoken to man, he must have spoken so that he cannot be misunderstood. Now, if you place the precepts of the New Testament before any man of average intelligence, he will have but little difficulty in ascertaining their meaning. Nor should it be forgotten, that none but an infinite mind can comprehend absolute truth, that to finite capacities it must be presented in its relative aspect, and that it is to be expected that it will be presented to free agents, so as to be a test of their moral condition. The first question to be settled is certainly this,—Would his teachings seem of doubtful meaning to any of his hearers, who listened to him in candour and earnestness of spirit? You cannot but have perceived, that though Mr Holyoake averred that Christ's teachings are ambiguous, he yet interpreted them—and interpreted them as no critic, no commentator, ancient or modern, so far as I know, has ever done. He appears to have canons of exegesis peculiar to himself, which I should like thoroughly to understand. In the exposition of any work, must we not seek to ascertain its object, its scope, its style, with the opinions and moral condition of the people to whom it was addressed? If we overlook these things in the study of the original documents of Christianity, is it at all likely that we shall arrive at the truth? He thinks that if they were divine, it would be impossible to misunderstand them; but it would be difficult to know what cannot be misunderstood

when it is examined through the medium of prejudice and indiscriminating antagonism. Can he deny that the great leading truths of Christianity, are easily comprehended, that they are level to the capacities of the young and the ignorant? Are not the principal precepts simple and clear? Has he proved that any of them were such that the Jews to whom they were originally addressed, could not ascertain their meaning? It requires neither high scholarship nor profound criticism, to show that the interpretations which he has put upon some passages are totally inadmissable. He does not wish to put a worse construction on passages than they will bear, and yet he puts on them a construction which the slightest examination of the original, and of the context, proves to be a thorough perversion. It is only because he puts such constructions on them, that he makes out that they are open to a double interpretation. He refuses to study the original, but if he will only consult our critics and commentators, many of whom have lacked neither learning nor honesty, he will find at least that they are *not* open to *his* interpretation. If he alleges that Christ's precepts are ambiguous and impracticable, and wishes to be absolved from wilfully turning away from the truth, we have a right to demand that he support his charge with something more than mere assertions. It would be satisfactory to believe that he does not look at holy writ in a fault-finding spirit, and that he seeks to derive guidance from its contents; but we must acknowledge it is rather difficult to believe this after looking at the specimens of his criticism. Christ's words have appealed to the understanding of thousands of all classes of men, and have conveyed precepts, which they have felt no difficulty in reducing to practice. Mr Holyoake will not surely wish to set his judgment above that of all others; he cannot expect us to regard him as the only authoritative expositor of the New Testament, and until he brings us evidence to support his conclusions we must demur to them. What right have we to expect precepts that cannot be misunderstood? Must a perpetual miracle be wrought upon the intellect? Must there be no test of man's willingness to receive the truth? Must there be no incentive to earnest study, and diligent criticism? Must Christ be condemned as a moral teacher because he addressed Jews in language which Jews could understand, and because he

frequently accommodated himself to their modes of thought and of expression? It appears to me, that a careful and candid criticism of the passages introduced for discussion on the previous night, would clearly show that to the persons to whom they were originally addressed, the precepts would appear neither ambiguous nor impracticable; and that they will not appear so to us, if we will only patiently, candidly, and honestly seek to ascertain their meaning.

Notwithstanding the oft-repeated question, 'What is meekness?' Mr Holyoake, not satisfied with the answer which we gave, was pleased to tell us that it is a servile feeling. Now, great as the oracle may be, we venture to question its response. Meekness is not a servile feeling, but the feeling of a conqueror. The meek man has conquered himself, and he will conquer his fate. The slave boy had courage to tell the truth, and to brave the consequences, while he meekly prayed for his murderer. It was the meek courage of the disciples of Christ that so often struck terror into the minds of their enemies, and eventually overcame heathenism; and, notwithstanding the predictions of Secularist prophets, we still believe that the meek shall inherit the earth.

Mr Holyoake was not satisfied with the exposition which I gave of the passage which refers to persecution. I understood him to assert that Christ teaches that persecution is in itself a blessing. If there is a warrant for such an assertion, the passage cannot be very ambiguous. But I have always read it as persecution for righteousness' sake, which can be the source neither of dishonour nor of misery to the man who is sustained by the integrity of his convictions, and the approving smile of his God. If Secularism does not, Christianity knows such a thing as happiness amid suffering. Mr Maccail was an eminent Scotch minister who died by the torture of the iron boot, in the time of persecution. Notwithstanding the extremity of his bodily pain, his dying language was triumphant. 'Farewell,' he exclaimed, 'sun, moon, and stars! Farewell, world and time! Farewell, weak and frail body! Welcome, eternity! Welcome, angels and saints! Welcome, Saviour of the world! Welcome, God the Judge of all!' Thrice happy Maccail! even though thou didst expire in the agonies of martyrdom! Better far that thou shouldest die thus

than that thou shouldest deny that Saviour who had redeemed thee from eternal misery!

Mr Holyoake told us, with considerable emphasis, that he may expect to enter the kingdom of heaven, as he thinks that his righteousness is better than that of the Scribes and Pharisees and that he may have some hope, as those who break Christ's commandments and teach men so, may be in the kingdom of heaven, though the least there. Now, had he read, with any degree of attention, the preceding context, he could never have come to such a conclusion. The expression, 'these commandments,' refers clearly to 'the law and the prophets'—the requirements of the Mosaic institute, which were binding upon the people, till superseded by the new dispensation, known to the Jews by the designation, 'the kingdom of heaven.' Whosoever of Christ's followers who should neglect its laws, and teach men so, should enjoy little esteem and influence in the new economy, while he who had conscientiously attended to them would prove his allegiance to God, and would be worthy of all respect. It might be objected to this view, that Christ teaches the perfect inviolability of the law till heaven and earth pass away. But, to a person at all familiar with the Old Testament phraseology, this would be no objection, for he knows that the dissolution of the Mosaic economy and the establishment of the Christian, is often spoken of as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the creation of the new. 'For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor brought into mind.' (Read Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 2. Hag. ii. 6. Heb. xii. 26, 27.) Christ's design was not to invalidate. He did not come, as, from the originality of his statements, some might suppose, to represent as of little authority the former revelation of the Divine will; his design was to complete it. The light had dawned; he brought the perfect day. The first part of a Divine manifestation had been given; he came to give the remaining and more important part. The foundation had been laid; he came to raise the superstructure. Christ showed the superiority of the Christian religion and morality to that of the Scribes and Pharisees. If he had possessed the character represented in those extracts which Mr Holyoake has read from the 'Phases of Faith,' is it at all probable that, at the very commencement of his public

ministry, he would have told the people so distinctly and pointedly, that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they could not enter the kingdom of heaven? Was it likely that one who was seeking popular favour would so unhesitatingly condemn the very men who were held in the highest esteem by the Jewish people? The Scribes were looked up to with the greatest reverence as teachers of religious and moral duty. The Pharisees, as separatists, were regarded as the class who, with greatest exemplariness, reduced their lessons to practice. Had he merely sought popular influence, would he ever have taught the necessity of a purer and higher morality? Would he have set himself against all their preconceived notions and prejudices? Is there not evidence that the morality which from the first he taught, was superior, not only to any system known in Judea, but to any which the world has ever seen? And if so, what, according to Mr Holyoake's argument, have we here? We have a charlatan, an impostor, teaching a purer and higher morality than that of the Jews or any other nation—giving to the world a system that has produced the most benign effect upon the hearts and lives of men in past ages—that has even been the harbinger of civilisation and of freedom, and that has filled the minds of the best and noblest of men with a deep sense of their deficiencies. It would, indeed, be a miracle of miracles that one possessing the character represented in those extracts, that a deceiver, without integrity or honesty of purpose, and only seeking to gain influence among the people, by sinister ends, should be the founder of a spiritual and moral system which has produced such wonderful and wide-spread impressions on the moral condition of the world! This is a miracle, which, however it may be received by sceptics, we have not credulity enough to believe. None could hear Christ without feeling that he had come to lay the axe to the root of the tree, and it was this that roused against him the deadly opposition of those who were interested in the support of prevailing false systems. It is the severe and thorough condemnation of all sin, whether of principle or of action, and its demand for purity of motive, and for holiness of heart, that has ever made it distasteful to multitudes who were determined to continue in sin. How astonished must the Jews have been to know that the religion and morality which

were to distinguish the citizens of the new kingdom, would be of a far more exalted kind than that taught by the Scribes and exemplified by the Pharisees. Their righteousness was external; Christ required truth in the innermost soul. He taught them that it availed nothing that they regarded the letter if they did not conform to the spirit of the Divine commandments. He showed how worthless is every attitude of devotion, and every semblance of charity, if the heart rises not in adoring gratitude to God and flows not out in pure benevolence to man. Theirs was a mere ritualism; he required a simple and spiritual worship. A round of bodily observances constituted their religion; Christ taught that we must worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Their righteousness was partial as well as external. They never aimed at obeying the whole law; Christ taught that he that offended in one point is guilty of all. They made a selection of the Divine principles, adapting, rejecting, or glossing them over to suit prejudice or popular opinion; Jesus required universal obedience to the moral law. Judaism, at its best estate, could never be permanent or universal; Christianity was adapted for men of all ages and of all lands. The existence of its moral system could never become effete or superfluous—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Their righteousness proceeded from principles defective and unsound. They sought to be seen of men. They prayed in the corners of the streets. They fasted publicly. They did their alms before men. Their anxiety was to secure the favour and applause of the people. Jesus taught that the heart must be right with God, that our works must proceed from right principles, that our obedience must originate in love to God, and be sustained by disinterested benevolence. They prided themselves on their superiority to others. Jesus taught that in human holiness there is no ground for boasting, inasmuch as previous sin renders it useless as a ground of confidence. He showed that their righteousness must be spiritual, sincere, and universal; that it must originate in and be sustained by proper motives; that it must not be a ground of boasting; and that they must draw their confidence from the only sacrifice in which the law of God finds a satisfaction for all its demands, else they would not be received and acknowledged

as subjects of that new and glorious kingdom which he had come to establish. The entire passage, though charged with ambiguity, is thus pregnant with instruction ; and every person who diligently studies it must see how pure, how spiritual, how practical, and how universal is the morality which it requires.

In reference to the passage, 'Resist not evil,' Mr Holyoake has told us, without the slightest hesitation, that no Christian ever thinks of obeying it, according to his own interpretation of it, which is flatly contradicted by the precept to which it stands in opposition. Does he not know, then, or has he forgotten, that there is a numerous class of Christians who understand this precept as requiring them on no account and under no circumstances to resist physical violence, and that in many memorable instances they have suffered none of the disastrous effects which he has assured us must flow from it. Has he never heard of the remarkable preservation of the property and lives of all Friends acting on the principle of non-resistance during the Irish Rebellion ? Does he not know that for more than a hundred years, the inhabitants of Pennsylvania, under Penn and his successors, though surrounded by Indian tribes, lived in uninterrupted security and peace. If time would allow I might show how perfect that security was. From a work that I have before me, I shall just read a sentence or two upon this subject. The barbarians, the writer says, speaking of the warfare between the natives and early European settlers in America, 'sometimes lay in wait for those who might come within their reach, on the highways or in the fields, and shot them without warning ; and sometimes they attacked the Europeans in their houses, scalping some, and knocking out the brains of others. From this horrible warfare the inhabitants sought safety by abandoning their homes and retiring to fortified places, or to the neighbourhood of garrisons ; and those whom necessity still compelled to pass beyond the limits of such protection, provided themselves with arms for their defence. But amidst this dreadful desolation and universal terror, the Society of Friends, who were a considerable portion of the whole population, were steadfast to their principles. They would neither retire to garrisons, nor provide themselves with arms. They remained openly in the country, whilst the rest were flying to the forts. They still

pursued their occupations in the fields or at their homes, without a weapon for annoyance or defence. And what was their fate? They lived in security. The habitation which, to his armed neighbour, was the scene of murder and of the scalping knife, was to the unarmed Quaker a place of safety and peace.' 'And the fate of the Quakers during the Rebellion in Ireland was nearly similar. It is well known that the rebellion was a time not only of open war, but of cold-blooded murder; of the utmost fury of bigotry and the utmost exasperation of revenge. Yet the Quakers were preserved even to a proverb; and when strangers passed through streets of ruin, and observed a house standing uninjured and alone, they would sometimes point and say, "That, doubtless, is the house of a Quaker." So complete, indeed, was the preservation which these people experienced, that in an official document of the Society they say, "No member of the Society fell a sacrifice but one young man; and that young man had assumed arms."'

But has Mr Holyoake proved that this precept absolutely forbids us, when injured, from seeking redress at the hands of the civil magistrate—not for the sake of our own interests merely, but for the welfare of society. Christ is drawing the contrast between his morality and that of the Scribes and Pharisees. They had allowed, that in many cases persons might take the law into their own hands. The *lex talionis* which had been given by Moses for the guidance of the magistrate had been applied to private life. Thus, a spirit had sprung up among the people most inimical to their own highest interests. Litigation almost universally prevailed. Roman history clearly shows for how very trifling causes, at that period, men would go to law with each other. Christ came to introduce a new state of things, by changing human hearts and filling them with the principles of true benevolence; and were all men to obey his teachings in every land beneath the sun, universal peace, universal freedom, and universal happiness would prevail. You may tell me that professors do not act upon these principles. This may be their shame and not their glory, but does not prove that there is anything unreasonable or impracticable in the requirement.

Mr Holyoake should know that neither Christ nor his apostles despised the functions of civil government, and that this passage

does not apply as a rule of guidance to the civil magistrate as such: the preceding context shows that it applies simply to the private citizen. When I am injured I have not to take the law into my own hands; on the contrary it is my duty to cherish the spirit that would overcome evil with good. The severest rebuke that I can give the man who would impose upon me and injure me, may be to give him more than he wishes; but who can argue from this that such would be the duty of the man, who is the representative of society, and who must see to it, that the laws which have been enacted for its safety are not violated with impunity? To yield to my enemy in a matter that does not involve a sacrifice of principle and a surrender of integrity, such as the Saviour illustrates by going a mile, or giving a coat, may be my duty and my wisdom —but to argue that the carrying out of that principle would have led the slave-boy to obey his master when he ordered him not to hear the missionary, or would have led the martyr to recant to please his persecutor, is the death of logic. Tell me, does it follow that because you may not take it upon you to redress your own wrongs, by a summary and personal infliction of punishment upon the transgressor, that human governments may not punish them? While God has expressly forbidden you to redress your own wrongs, by administering personal and private chastisement, he has expressly recognised the right, and made it the duty of the public magistrate to punish crimes, without any particular regard to your personal interest, but with an eye to the public good.

Mr Holyoake was not satisfied with the explanation which I gave of Christ's conversation with the young man who came to him enquiring what he should do to enjoy eternal life. He did not like the supposition that gold was the young man's idol, standing in the way of his highest happiness, because preventing his enjoyment of God's friendship, and producing that selfish sordidness of heart which constitutes a man a miser. But is there no evidence in the narrative that this was the young man's state? He thought that he had loved God with all his heart—he required to be shown that he was self-deceived, and that could be done only by exposing the idol of his soul.' Christ asked him to do no more than himself had done. He could say, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.' Mr Holyoake suspects that I would

be sorrowful if I was asked to do the same. Now, it is little that I have in the world, and my perception of the value of the gospel may be but feeble, but there are thousands of men who, under the constraining influence of love to Christ, have forsaken emolument, honour, fame, and wealth to follow Jesus, and to bless their fellow-creatures; and I doubt not there are thousands still, who, if it would bring higher glory to God and greater good to man, would not hesitate to part with their worldly possessions to follow Christ in his career of beneficence. A critic that charges Jesus with moral unsoundness on account of his replies to the young man, does not seem to me to have a capacity for judging of the Scriptures candidly, or to have any profound reverence for the spiritual nature of Christ. We are told, indeed, that the materials for forming an opinion are imperfect, and the entire charge stands out before us as a mere suspicion that has no foundation in facts, and that cannot for a moment be entertained by any one who has the least sympathy with Jesus. If character has to be judged of in this manner, no one can be safe from the voice of suspicion and the tongue of calumny. To tell me that He who ever manifested the deepest interest in the inquirer—that He who was ever ready to bind up the broken-hearted, and to guide wanderers to the fold of eternal love—that He, who, after the labours of the day, delighted at the midnight hour to unfold to Nicodemus the glorious character of God—that He who, wearied and faint, after a long journey beneath a tropical sun, felt it more than meat and drink to guide the degraded woman of Samaria to that living water which would for ever slake her thirst for happiness,—to tell me that He would have been glad to be rid of this inquirer, and that He was characterised by ostentation, evasion, and trickery,—justice and humanity equally reprobate the insult.

Mr Holyoake does not like a charity that 'seeketh not her own,' he thinks that she will have little to give to others; now it is just because she seeketh not her own that she has so much to give. The heart increases its stores of love in proportion as it dispenses them with profusion. The stronger the stream of kindness that flows out to others, the deeper and wider will become its channel, and the more will it diffuse itself. In wishing

and labouring for the happiness of others, our own happiness is secured.

If Mr Holyoake had consulted any competent Greek scholar in reference to the passages—'Take no thought of your life,' 'Take no thought of to-morrow'—he would have been informed that those who listened to Jesus must have understood him to say—'Be not anxious.' My friend might, therefore, have been saved all the trouble of his remarks upon reconcilement of passages. It was not necessary that I should quote other passages to prove that Christianity is the friend neither of idleness nor of improvidence—to show that it requires us to attend to our daily work, to be diligent in our business, and to make proper provision for the necessities of those dependent upon us. The paragraph which is condemned, clearly implies that men are expected both to toil and spin; while it is designed to repress fretfulness and inspire confidence. The literal and simple meaning of the Greek verb is—'Be not anxious.' And is not He who can furnish us with an antidote to anxiety a benefactor of the world? Among all classes do we not find a great amount of anxious care which is highly inimical to real happiness? In the case of the toil-worn mechanic, does anxiety about his earthly prospects never threaten the destruction of his mental and physical energy? The sinews of industry move not freely under the leaden weight of care. Freedom from anxiety is not more a condition of cheerfulness than of success. Carking care is equally the foe of intellectual and of moral greatness. It unfits the rich for usefulness and the poor for labour. How joyless is the hearth where it presides! how desolate the heart where it dwells! Cheerful confidence is necessary to earnest effort. He who does not hope will not long work, except as a slave. Surely, then, the Great Teacher, in giving us such a view of our position, and of Divine providence as will repress anxious care, is the friend of man. He took cognisance of the trying circumstances in which we are sometimes placed, and of earthly cares, to repress the outgoings of the soul after a pure and spiritual happiness. He furnishes a grand antidote to the depressing and enervating anxieties that may beset us here, which proves equally an antidote to the slothfulness and indifference which

creep over the spirit under the influence of a dreary fatalism. In words of deepest tenderness, and by illustrations of surpassing beauty, he presents to us a Being on whom our confidence can rest, and in whom our affections can centre—a Heavenly Father. He speaks to us of a world from which its Creator has not retired, leaving it to the guidance of chance or to the control of necessity, but where he himself reigns, and where order and laws are but the modes of his beneficent operation. He would lead the weary and restless heart of humanity to find repose in the All-knowing, the Ever-Good. Christ tells us that 'the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.' Life is given, and all the physical, intellectual, and social good which it involves; and will that which is necessary to its sustenance be withheld? Look at the body with its ten thousand wonderful contrivances for comfort, and beauty, and pleasure; shall He who reared that matchless organism make no provision for its being clothed? Again, 'Behold the fowls of the air,' provision is made for them, and by unerring instinct they are led to it, and to attend to the wants of their young; and need those who have reason, and who can sow, reap, and gather into barns give way to anxious fear? Every beautiful flower, every arrangement in the world around us, rebukes distrust. Above all, Jesus, the gift of infinite love, is fitted to inspire confidence. Faith is the grave of care and the antidote to fear. A cheerful trust in the Eternal Father will nerve the soul with a holy courage, and prepare it alike for the faithful discharge of relative duties, and the patient endurance of the trials of life. Whether the sceptic understand these words of Christ or not, there are thousands who have felt a blessed influence steal over their souls as they have listened to the gentle whisper, 'Be not anxious.' To vindicate this precept to men who seem determined to put the harshest and narrowest construction upon every word that Christ uttered, does not seem difficult, on the principles of a rigid utilitarianism, but to myriads who have felt its power to soothe their spirits and hush their fears to rest, it requires neither vindication nor exposition.

I shall now proceed, so far as the time left me will permit, to the consideration of the substance of Mr Holyoake's remarks to-night. He spoke of the savage parts of the New Testament; but he did

not tell us what they are, nor did he show us where they are to be found. We demand proofs instead of assertions. He cannot show us anything in Christianity that is opposed to truth, or justice, or benevolence. There is nothing in its spirit or teachings to smile upon cruelty or to encourage rudeness. My friend tells us that the tactics of infidelity are completely changed within the last few years; that it is no longer satisfied with a piecemeal attack, but is resolved to engage in a wholesale warfare. Its former assaults have availed nothing against a system which it would gladly destroy by one fell swoop, and it now attempts another mode. Without hesitation, the evidence of miracles and of prophecy is conceded; but moral tests have to be applied that will prove it to be fatally wanting. Whatever truth there may be in it, historically or doctrinally considered, it is asserted that it is defective in moral influence. We are told that, however much it may have been in advance of the system prevalent among the obscure inhabitants of Judea, in the days of Christ, it will not bear examination under the greater light and knowledge of the nineteenth century. We are challenged to examine the gospel as a whole in its moral bearings. This is just what we wish. Not for a moment do we hesitate to join issue here. If the gospel does not elevate man's moral condition, it is defective and worthless. The question then is, 'What effect has the gospel as a whole upon the human mind?' It is a question of actual moral experiment. It brings us away from the region of mere theories and speculations to that of stubborn facts. It places us in a position from which we may without difficulty compare Christianity with other systems. On this ground, it will be easy to decide the relative merits of Christianity and Secularism. Let Mr Holyoake carry his doctrines to any depraved, degraded man—to one who has been degraded, not by the acts of others, nor by the circumstances in which he is placed, but by his own principles and conduct, and see what will be the effect. Let him tell such a man that there is no proof of the existence of a God, of a future state, or of a judgment; that he is the creature of organisation and circumstances, and that he is rather to be pitied than blamed for his crimes, and it requires no spirit of prophecy to predict that it will encourage him in his selfishness, and sink him deeper into the mire of sin. Let me carry to a man equally degraded the gospel of Divine love; let me assure him that, in spite of his self-originated and aggravated sins, Jehovah

infinitely loves him, and is willing to forgive him, on the ground of the great propitiation; that he has been created to live for ever, and to reflect the moral image of God; that there is a judgment-seat at which he must give account of all the deeds done in the body; that there is a Spirit of grace ever ready to help his infirmities, and to give him power over temptation;—let him believe these great truths, and, while filling his mind with a holy peace, they will furnish the most powerful restraint from sin. Such is the invariable testimony of the past, and experiments, conducted on the most extensive scale, can lead to no other conclusion. This, we readily admit, is the argument which tells most powerfully on the majority of minds. Christianity meets man's moral necessities; it gives the clearest manifestation of pardon, it presents the highest incentives to virtue, it inspires the brightest hopes of eternal happiness; and thus, bearing the imprimatur of heaven, it commends itself to man's consideration, and when received, is found to be all that it professes to be. The ground which Mr Holyoake takes is the ground on which every true believer, however illiterate, can meet him. I would be ready to acknowledge that there are many Christians among the less educated classes that are not able to give any very clear and logical account of the external and internal evidences of Christianity, but I never met with any real Christian that could not give a reason of his faith—a reason perfectly satisfactory to his own mind; he had tried it, and found its power on his own heart. This reason has often been the butt of the sceptic's ridicule; we are thankful that it can now be understood and appreciated. You may confuse the unlearned Christian by historical questions, and bewilder him by sophistries, but so long as he realises in his own mind the experimental evidence, you can never take the stronghold of his faith. Further to illustrate the subject, let me suppose that there is a man afflicted with a painful disease, which has mocked the skill of the most experienced physicians. He is given up by all, and entertains no hope of his recovery. A stranger brings to him medicine, with the assurance that it has healed many in similar circumstances. In desperation he takes it, and is completely restored to health. But it is asserted by some that the medicine was poison. The stranger is charged with quackery, and has to be prosecuted

for dispensing medicine without a diploma. The case has to be tried before a jury of his fellow-countrymen. The man whose health is restored is brought as a witness. It is asked if he took the medicine which that gentleman gave him. He answers that he did. He is asked if he knows the name of the medicine which he took. He says he does not. Does he know its chemical ingredients? No; he knows nothing of chemistry. Does he know its influences upon the different parts of the physical organism? No; he knows nothing of physiology or of medicine. What, then? Is his testimony worthless? By no means; he can say that till he saw that stranger death was ever before him; and that from the hour he took the medicine he began to recover. Thus it was with the blind man who had been restored to sight by Jesus. Some insisted that Jesus was a sinner; his reply was, 'Whether he be a sinner or no I cannot tell; but one thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.' The most illiterate Christian can ever answer after this manner. Jesus has healed him, has saved him, has given him sight, has chased away his fear, has broken the fetters of his soul, has made him a new man. He has found in the life of Jesus the highest model for imitation, and the strongest stimulus to goodness, and he cannot believe in such distorted representations of his character as have been given to-night. Infidelity he has tried, and found in it nothing to satisfy; Christianity he has tried, and found in it all good for time and eternity; therefore he clings to it.

Mr HOLYOAKE:—Understanding that Mr Rutherford has been indisposed since we last met, I purposely confine myself to the most dispassionate statement of my own opinions; and I do so, moreover, because that is the proper way in which the subject should be explained to this audience. Briefly, I will notice the points to which Mr Rutherford has drawn our attention. I could wish he had addressed himself not to the subject of last night's discussion wholly but to the subject of this evening's debate; you, however, must be content to hear what we have respectively to say, and make comparisons. I could wish Mr Rutherford had noticed present arguments. It is perhaps not possible to answer everything on the instant to every body. I account the value of debate to consist in the utterance of contrastive convictions; and if

everything is not replied to, you will not have a right to conclude that it cannot be replied to, but you may take notice of the fact that it is not replied to. Mr Rutherford has told us that absolute or divine truth cannot be grasped by the finite mind—in fact, that it cannot be presented to it: then I suppose, as it *cannot* be presented, it *has not* been presented in the Scriptures. He thinks I have canons of criticism peculiar to myself: all I have said is, that certain precepts are impracticable, and I infer that the Christian world is of the same opinion, for they do *not* practice them—hence there is no peculiarity in my interpretation. Nowhere have *I* said that if Mr Rutherford does not read the Bible as I read it, he wants either candour or honesty; it is seldom in speeches to myself Mr Rutherford employs a mode of expression which conveys an invidious or offensive imputation; but when he says that if we do not read the Bible as he does, it is because we lack 'candour' or 'honesty,' he deviates from his accustomed propriety. We are all apt to say these things, but larger experience teaches us better. In my case such a charge is specially inapplicable. My argument is, that the Christian world do not read certain precepts as you read them, since they neither practice, nor attempt to practice them. I never used the phrase that Christ was guilty either of trickery or evasion, nor did my argument convey any such meaning—these are not points now in discussion, and therefore demand no reply at my hands. Mr Rutherford has said, if I go to the Greek scholars, I shall find such a phrase as 'take no thought for to-morrow,' interpreted to mean 'take no *anxious* thought for the morrow.' Well, I did go to the Greek scholars, and I told Mr Rutherford myself, that that was the only explanation which he could give of his text; but my argument was, that the language in which the passage is couched is not happy and not free from ambiguity, because Christ tells you, in illustration of this doctrine, that you are to consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, and toil not—referring you to a case in illustration in which no kind of reflection or anxiety is possible. Trying the matter, then, by critical interpretation, we are perfectly justified in saying that it is an ambiguous and doubtful moral precept, which, telling us that we are to take no thought (meaning by that, no anxious thought), gives in illustration, objects which can take no kind of thought whatever.

Mr Rutherford says—Where can I find examples of savageness in the New Testament? Many of the questions which my friend asks, are such as he ought not to ask, because they are irrelevant; and no man has a right to ask me here questions, except they lie in the record of the controversy. I might answer him, if it were proper to do so, by reminding him that the Rev. Brewin Grant, who met me in discussion, and represented on that occasion a large body of Christians in this country, employed every form of sarcasm, bitterness, and imputation, and told me, in justification thereof, that Christ did so likewise, and that Christ's example justified his conduct, which it did. My friend overlooks the fact that happiness or contentment under persecution does not imply that the persecution itself is a blessing. During my own imprisonment I was as happy and contented as ever I was in my life, so far as my own fortunes were concerned; and rather more so, because I felt a conscious pride in vindicating my right to my own opinion. But although I had this satisfaction and pleasure, which Secularism inspires as well as Christianity, it does not follow that my imprisonment was a blessing to me. Imprisonment is never a blessing; and hence I am right in saying that the use of such language as, 'Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you,' without the qualification which Mr Rutherford himself suggests, is an instance of ambiguity in the utterance of oracles; and if he thinks it is wrong to demand this exactness, he ought to remember how solemn is the import attached to these words, for do you not perpetually give us the words of the Scriptures, requiring every syllable to be believed on pain of eternal perdition? If your book was merely a human book which I might read as well as I was able, rejecting what was inconsistent in any sense with critical propriety, it would be different; but when you, from your pulpits, insist on the acceptation of every syllable of it, then I have a right to demand that there shall not be a shadow of doubt about its meaning.

Last night Mr Rutherford invariably assumed that the antithesis of meekness was vengeance. He could not see, and Christ did not see, that there is a mean between the two—that we need not be either meek or revengeful—that there is something beyond submission before we come to retaliation; and that is, a wise, magnanimous, and considerate resistance. Mr Rutherford

has given us as an illustration of meekness and forgiveness, the boy who forgave and prayed for his master. That was an act of generous grandeur, but there was activity in the sentiment—it was not a sentiment of entire submission; and hence Mr Rutherford continually compounds the functions of meekness and forgiveness. Mr Rutherford takes away the slender moiety of consolation which I endeavoured to derive from the circumstance of any righteousness exceeding the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. What sort of encouragement do you give us to believe when, pointing to a single passage which indicates that if we do well it will be recognised and rewarded, you wrest from us even that passage by a partial interpretation? We refer to the Scribes and Pharisees. You give us a long homily to explain what they were: am I not right, then, in saying that passages which require so much explanation and the addition of contexts, are not clearly expressed? If they were so, they would not require your assistance to develope their meaning. Mr Rutherford objects to my interpreting the phrase 'resist not evil' strictly. If I may put on Scripture what interpretation I please, or that which best suits my notions of propriety—if you mean to grant me that privilege, then my argument is at an end, and I no longer find fault with the expression of various precepts; but if Mr Rutherford does not mean to grant me this privilege, then he must allow me still to inquire in what manner we are to understand so distinct an enunciation as 'resist not evil'? Does Mr Rutherford understand it in the sense in which it is put down? He spoke of the Quakers as though they were instances of persons who carried out the precept, and whose example we ought to imitate. I ask my friend, does he sleep with his doors open, does he leave his boxes unlocked—because every form of carefulness in these matters is a tacit resistance of evil? He referred to the Quakers, but he overlooked the history of Quakerdom altogether—how they owed their preservation to the distinct understanding which they took care to make throughout all the tribes of the Indians, that they were not the persons who made aggressions—their success lay, not in non-resistance, but in never being the aggressive party. If men everywhere would act on that principle, unquestionably they might often save themselves—but we have to judge of maxims by their ap-

plicability to the state of society in which we live. It is no use telling us that if every man followed out certain precepts of Christ, all would be well. If every man was virtuous, of course there would be no crime; but the merit of a moral precept consists in its being such as in the state in which we find ourselves we shall be able to practice. We are told that this precept is applicable only to the private citizen, not to the public functionary or magistrate. I want to know how Mr Rutherford ascertains that Christ meant this, seeing he did not say so. How does he presume to put this interpretation upon it, and thus warrant me in discarding a precept given in so distinct a manner? He can only do so by adopting what he calls the death of logic—he must first apply himself to discover other passages more reasonable and proper, and then interpret the one by the other, or rather, abolish one passage in order to substitute another of an opposite or different meaning. What is this but tacitly admitting that my objection is valid, and that the precepts of Christ are not so accurate, unmistakeable, and unambiguous, as Divine words might have been, and as words on which our salvation hangs certainly ought to have been?

I will say nothing about the medicine to which my friend referred, under the name of Christianity, because he overlooked the fact that the world for the last eighteen centuries has been taking this medicine, and is not yet healed. He thinks to justify the assertion by telling us that certain Christians have grown better by adopting Christianity—a statement which I have never denied; on the contrary, I say that all people who are below the standard of Christianity will be benefited by being raised to its level, whilst those who are above that standard (and unless you deny that the world has progressed in arts and science, it is impossible to believe that our morality is not higher than it was among an obscure Jewish nation nearly 2000 years ago) will be depressed by adopting the Bible as their standard. Mr Rutherford forgets how easily he is answered by an appeal to the Catholic, Hindoo, or Pagan; why, there is not a Roman Catholic who will not tell you in stronger terms than you would employ, that his religion is a consolation, benefit, and blessing to *him*. Go to the Hindoo, the Thuggee, and the Parsee, and they will tell you, in precisely the same language, how much *they* have been elevated,

and how much better and happier they have been made by their religion. The only ground on which we can conduct this discussion in a manner useful to the public, is not by a comparison of other's states of mind, but the adoption of a broader philosophy—not by dwelling upon what the Scriptures have accomplished, but comparing what they might have accomplished under other circumstances; nay, our debate is still narrower, for the question here is, are the instances which you challenge me to cite, justly open to the objections which I raise against them? Mr Rutherford is bound to travel in this narrow record, otherwise I shall receive no defence from him, and the meeting will gain no instruction from this controversy.

The issue I have to prove is, that some sentiments to which Christ gave utterance are disastrous. Mr Rutherford is in possession of the passages to which I am going to refer, and I will read from the 9th chapter of Mark, 42nd and 49th verses: 'And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea.' Take it as a metaphor or as a literal expression, you cannot deny that there is a disproportion between the punishment and the offence which breathes of the barbarian atrocity of retaliation. Again, 'And if thy hand offend thee cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands *to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*' Mark the reasons which Christ gives, and tell me whether you are prepared to cancel the solemn words, and explain away the serious meaning of this moral precept? Christ continued—'And if thy foot offend thee cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet *to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*' Mark the terrible repetition of the words—'And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes *to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' I object to this passage (within my record) in these terms: I interpret human language with a human license.

If I am to believe such parts of this work as seem to me to be true, and no more—if I am to act by the scriptures with the same freedom which I elsewhere employ, I shall reject much of it. If I think Christ means here that I am literally to cut off my hand, it is because he spake consistently with the reason which he alleges for it; it is not wonderful that he should tell me literally to destroy my body, while he reserved to himself the right of destroying my soul. You call upon me to disbelieve his literal words. I am perfectly willing to do so, but I want to know your warrant for telling me thus to act. If I disbelieve his literal words touching my *hand*, am I to disbelieve the same words touching my *soul?* That he will burn my soul is as repugnant to my moral sense as telling me to cut off my hand or pluck out mine eye is repugnant to the physical sense or natural feeling; and why should not Christ mean this literally?—for if the alternative of damnation be true, the sacrifice of a hand or an eye to avoid that evil is a mere bagatelle. A being cursed with passion in excess, carries the element of sin with him through life; he can never escape temptation; he has no choice between madness and falling. All tragedy recognises this truth, for all tragedy arises out of it. If, therefore, human error exposes us to eternal fire, Christian advice, terrible as it is literally, is the only true doctrine. Where effects are eternal misery, the literal destruction of the cause is mercy. But if your humanity rejects the literal hypothesis, where do you stop? If the amputation is metaphorical, is the eternal burning literal? If your humanity makes them *both* metaphors, I am content. But do not say *I* libel Christ by making his precept literal, while you libel God by making his *eternal punishment literal.* My friend, therefore, need not tell me that I ought not to put on these words a literal interpretation, because I do not want to do so. But do you not tell us it is better to be on the safe side? Is it not wise, then, to put the strictest interpretation on language so severe in its import, rather than to tamper with its obvious meaning? If you say Christ did not mean me to cut off my right hand, then I say his language is calculated to mislead; if your humanity rejects the barbarity of the precept, does it not also reject the barbarity of the punishment, 'the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched?' If you say this is metaphorical, too, then how can our

scepticism involve us in eternal perdition? You must explain away frankly and explicitly, the doctrine of everlasting punishments—these are simply barbarous similes to be so regarded and discarded, and which ought no longer to pain the ear, harass the imagination, or torment with gloomy, ferocious, and horrible fear on the bed of death. Your Scriptures are a double book—they play fast and loose with our fears; first alarming us with words of terrible import, and then addressing us in accents of mercy and love. If Christ has spoken, I cannot suppose that he meant any of his ministers to rise up and on his own authority re-judge what God has said. I am bound to think he would not trifle with mankind: that he meant what he said; and if I reject one part of the book for the grossness of its inhumanity, I am bound in this instance to reject the other—for if the one is a libel on my humanity, the other is a libel on the humanity of God. I will put you in possession, as nearly as I am able, of the rule on which I proceed, and my friend will then tell you whether my canons are peculiarly arbitrary or unjustifiable—whether they exhibit a want of candour or earnestness, or an unwillingness to put the best interpretation on the words of Christ which they will bear. Assuming the Scriptures to be the Word of God, we read to believe, not in a hypercritical spirit to criticise, but to wonder and adopt; inconsistencies, we at once allow to be blemishes in other books, we feel bound to reconcile when found in the Bible; we esteem that a virtue in the character of Christ which we should condemn in Mahommet, Joanna Southcote, Joseph Smith, or Zion Ward. Indeed, Christians as well as sceptics, are inclined to treat with contempt any ascription of carelessness of language to Christ. To make this plain, then, we will suppose a rhetorical case. If a stranger appeared before this assembly uttering the nobler sentiments of Jesus, he would at once enlist sympathy and esteem. Let a new teacher arise preaching the doctrine of forgiveness, that we ought to overcome evil with good, reminding us that the sun shines on the evil as well as the good, on the just as well as on the unjust—though the stranger might be without credentials or ttestation, if he acted out his precepts in his own life, he would draw all men unto him as readily as was done two thousand years ago in Palestine. The same magnificent language would wear as much novelty in this recriminating, priest-jarring world

in our day as when first pronounced on the mountains of Galilee or in the streets of Jerusalem. Christ did not move the heart of Judea more profoundly than did Confucius, four hundred years before him, move the heart of China when he first declared, that 'What a man does not want done to him, let him not do it to others.' If a second stranger appeared telling us that good works will not save us, that our righteousness is but as filthy rags, that God sits, like an eastern tyrant, over the tombs of his victims, listening to the dying groans of these immured alive, and that men shall be burnt by a God of love for ever and ever because of conscientious differences of opinion, men would turn from the diabolical herald of these dismal inventions with horror and disgust; and so shall all of us were it not that these things are written in our Bible. We therefore know what to trust in the Scriptures, and what to distrust. That which, when spoken by a stranger, elevates the common nature to grandeur—that is truth. That which, when spoken by a stranger, shocks our honest instinct and depraves it—that is falsehood, whoever may utter it, and whatsoever may happen to attest it. I have put in these expressions the rule by which we may judge whether these things are of moral truth or Divine wisdom, or not—that which nobly appeals to our intelligence and heart may be Divine; that which revolts us, and which we should not endure in any earthly teacher, we ought to reject as falsehood; for we should be careful in not imputing to God that which we should hold to be morally hurtful and intellectually disreputable when spoken by our fellowman.

Mr RUTHERFORD:—I shall proceed at once to the consideration of the objections which Mr Holyoake has urged to the character of Jesus. To me it seems a settled principle, that in order to form an estimate of the character of any one, we should seek to view it as a whole; and when we have ascertained that it is marked by some distinguishing excellence, nothing but the most indubitable evidence should lead us to interpret any isolated act in opposition to that trait. If any act should be capable of a double meaning, justice as well as charity demands that it should be understood in harmony with the general and well established principles of the agent. It appears to me that in the lengthened extracts which have been read from Mr Newman's work, we have

a wholly one-sided view of the character of Christ, and that his objections are founded on passages of Scripture, either taken out of their proper connexion, or examined without any regard to the great object which Jesus ever spake of as the end of his mission. I know of no character in which we have such a manifestation of unity of purpose, but if that unity of purpose be totally disregarded, our examination can be neither just nor satisfactory. That we may join in the condemnation of Christ, we are asked to dismiss from our minds all ideas of a vicarious sacrifice, and all scriptural representations of an atonement for sin! Unless we do this no charge against him can be substantiated. Unless we admit the premises that Christ was a mere man, and that he was not a propitiation for sin, the conclusion at which our critic seems so earnestly to aim can never be reached. It is on this account he is so urgent that we should banish from our minds the host of scriptural texts that prove the divinity of Christ's person, and the reality and vicariousness of his sacrifice. It is admitted that if Christ is God, and if he had a divine mission, the matter is settled, and there can be no further argument upon the point. The simple question then arises, 'Is not this the doctrine of the New Testament?' Does not that book clearly teach that his death was a satisfaction to public justice for human transgression? Does not the doctrine of atonement for sin run through the whole of revelation? Can any one even cursorily examine the sacred page without finding in it the all-pervading idea of pardon through a propitiatory sacrifice? Before we take it for granted that the mission of Christ was not divine, are we not bound to examine the narrative of his life? Before we allege that the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship were ill-founded, are we not bound to compare his actual history with the predictions of his advent, his character, and his work in the Old Testament? Is there any evidence that Jesus made any pretensions which he needed to retract? Did he not invariably seek to change the minds of the Jews in reference to the Messiah, and to show them that the scriptural representation was not that of a great temporal prince who should deliver them from the Roman yoke, but of a spiritual king who should emancipate them from the dominion of sin and Satan—the direst bondage under which an immortal being can

groan? Did he not assiduously labour, from the very commencement of his ministry, to enlighten the minds of his disciples as to the true object of Messiah's mission? Did he not assure them that the kingdom of heaven, the reign of love and of righteousness, would not be introduced with pomp or display? and is it at all probable that he would think of ostentatiously introducing the dispensation which he came to establish? Was there not evidence of meekness and lowliness through all his life? If he made himself liable to legal punishment by the course that he pursued, why did none of his accusers, then, ever dream of the charges that are now made against him? How did it become necessary to suborn false witnesses, if he was so worthy of punishment? Why could they not make any case against him, without torturing the very words that he had uttered for telling his own death, to indicate a design to destroy the temple? How were the very men whom he had so righteously condemned, and who thirsted for his blood, unable to substantiate any charge against him? Had the chief priests and Pharisees neither incentive nor inclination to notice the very semblance of violation of law in his life, and to make the most of it in his trial? How, then, did they neither make nor attempt to support such charges? How is it that these charges are left to be made by men who profess reverence for his character and sympathy with his sufferings? The great facts of his life are all against them; the whole tenor of his conduct proves that their suspicions are unfounded. That his self-sacrifice was perfectly voluntary we do not doubt; but this only illustrates the benevolence of his heart, and the magnanimity of his character. Man's interference was not needed to provide an atonement for sin; Jesus might have died solely from mental anguish. His work could, in no wise, be rendered more acceptable by any suffering inflicted on him by man. It was the dignity of his person, and the disinterestedness of his sacrifice, that gave it moral worth. He was crucified and slain by wicked hands. His conduct throughout was fitted to melt and disarm his murderers, and had it done so, he might still have been a propitiation for the sins of the world. Mr Holyoake may indeed tell us that such an atonement was not necessary, but the Moral Governor of the universe has thought otherwise; and to those who calmly look at the Divine arrangement, it must appear the

highest display of infinite wisdom. Mr Holyoake would not like the civil magistrate to neglect the punishment of those who violate public law, and the protection of the rights of society; why, then, should he expect the Supreme Magistrate of the universe not to protect the intelligent and holy subjects of his government from the terrible effects of sin by the infliction of the merited penalty? If he can show us the wisdom of promulgating a law without any sanctions, or the righteousness of unconditionally remitting the penalty when the law has been broken, then his objections to the work of Christ might have some force. Whatever he may say to the contrary, expiation is a want as widely and deeply felt as instruction. The world needed a Divine mediator, as well as a heavenly teacher. In Jesus of Nazareth it finds both. The gospel equally meets man's guilt and ignorance. Truth sufficient to enlighten the world had been made known during Christ's brief ministry, and embodied in his short life. Though his sun went down in early day, it went not down till he had finished his work. Into that brief life was compressed what might fill earth with gratitude, and eternity with praise; and it has produced more wonderful moral results in human minds than all the works of poets and philosophers in all ages. Nor is the influence of his work confined to the Jewish people, or to the age in which he lived; it has been felt by men of all nations, and of all tongues—is destined to become universal and to be felt through all time. Moral is far higher than merely intellectual dominion, and this is the dominion which Jesus exerts over millions of minds that would otherwise have groaned under the galling bondage of sin. Confidently we are told that we do not want people to die for us. But it is not left with man to decide the necessities of Divine moral government. A more befitting position for him is to make enquiry regarding the adaptation of God's arrangements to his wants. To attempt the former is the height of presumption, to attend to the latter is the dictate of reason. Nor does it seem at all difficult to perceive some of the bearings of an atonement for sin, upon the moral government of the universe. Does there not appear an absolute necessity for a manifestation of Divine displeasure at sin, and a determination to uphold the law in its integrity, in order that the pardon of the transgressor might not

appear a connivance at his sin? Was it of no moment that in the exercise of mercy, no dishonour should be done to the majesty of holiness? If God is a Saviour, must he not also be known as a just Judge? Could he free the criminal from the consequences of his wrong-doing without regarding the honour of his law, the requirements of his administration, the rectitude of his character, and the interests of his empire? It should ever be borne in mind that the satisfaction of Christ was not necessary to make God willing to forgive. It was the fruit of self-moved compassion to the guilty and the miserable. To represent God as a tyrant demanding the infliction of suffering and punishment unnecessarily, is to malign his character. Never in the Scriptures is he represented as requiring the atonement of Jesus in order that he may love men. (A cry of 'Question.') I think that I am not wandering from the question. The question is, whether in viewing the life of Christ we have to look upon him merely as a teacher or as the God-sent Redeemer of the human family (applause); and Mr Holyoake, as I understand him, admitted that if Jesus of Nazareth occupied this position, the argument is at an end, and the objections which he has read from Mr Newman's work, fall completely to the ground. Now, if the whole subject is calmly considered, I think it is not at all difficult to come to a clear understanding on this point, and to see that the New Testament presents Christ not only as the perfect model of moral excellence, but also as the only Redeemer of man, as having provided that great moral expedient in the Divine government, on the ground of which God can be just in justifying the ungodly who submit to it, and thus become changed in legal position and in moral character. Mr Holyoake has acknowledged during this discussion that man has sinned, and he does not and cannot, deny that sin is followed by certain consequences, whether natural or superadded, we do not at present stop to determine. Certain it is, that in many instances, wrong-doing produces a feeling of guiltiness, of dread, and of remorse, of which man cannot rid himself, notwithstanding his most earnest and persevering desire to crush it. No man can show that these consequences will not follow him into the future state, and create within him a very hell. The dread of judgment indicates a judge; and the sense of retribution clearly points to a moral governor who must see

to it that his law is not broken with impunity, that righteousness and transgression do not meet with the same award, that sin brings suffering to its author, and that no one is saved from the righteous penalty of the law without a moral compensation, which, as a manifestation of its purity, and the intentions of the lawgiver, would be equivalent to the actual and full infliction of the punishment on the transgressors themselves. If this is admitted—and it is the Bible view of the matter—then we see the necessity of a special interposition to save men from the consequences of sin, and we see a reason why Jesus did not hesitate to suffer and die. By his atoning sacrifice, he sought to turn away from us those appalling consequences. He laid down his life that he might bestow life upon us. He became obedient unto death that we might be saved from eternal despair. To tell us that Christ purposely rushed on death to avoid exposure, that he sought to exasperate the chief priests and Pharisees, that he determined to bring his life to a tragic end by exciting the worst passions of the populace, is not to prove it; the assertions are unsupported by a particle of evidence, and are clearly contradicted by the whole life of Jesus, which was an embodiment of the spirit of universal benevolence, and by the explicit declarations of the New Testament as to the object of his mission. If he denounced the powerful, it was not to exasperate, but to warn. And had he not spoken out boldly and fearlessly against tyranny, oppression, and the robbery of the poor, our critics would have been the first to condemn, and to tell us that he cared more to be on the side of might and riches and rank, than on the side of right though it was feeble and obscure. He spoke out freely, truthfully, and solemnly; not behind their back, but to their faces; not to irritate, but to save. The wound was deep, and it needed probing. They needed to know their true condition, and he sought to remove the veil from their eyes. He unmasked their hypocrisy that the people might see that religion does not consist in outward sanctity and high sounding professions, and that it imperatively demands justice and mercy and truth. If I see a man hastening to the verge of some terrible precipice, and ready to perish, and if I faithfully warn him of his danger, must I be charged with cruelty and with an intention to exasperate him? And because Christ showed the oppressors and deceivers

of the people their real character and their imminent peril, must he be charged with the intention of exciting the fiercest passions of their nature, in order that they should bring him to a malefactor's death? Must we not rather conclude, in view of his whole life, that his benevolent object was to awaken their torpid consciences, and to turn them from the error of their ways?

[Not till now have I been furnished with an an swerto the question,—'In what respect do you consider Christ's death wanting in force of intellectual character?' A reference to the close of the evangelic narratives is no answer. In appealing to these narratives we see how groundless are the charges made against Christ. The most eager scrutiny is not rewarded with any facts on which to rest a charge against his moral character; but there is silence in reference to certain points, and that silence is construed unfavourably to him. Our critics most generously draw their conclusions, not from what is said, but from what is not said in these brief records, and consider themselves wondrously charitable in alleging that it wanted intellectual forcefulness. What can we make of a charge stated and reiterated, but supported by no evidence whatever? And what shall we say of the men who make it? What would society become, if men judged each other in this manner? We thought that justice waited for clear, incontestable, indubitable facts, before making a charge; and that to make a charge without such facts, flowed either from prejudice or malice. But we must not for a moment doubt the conscientiousness, sincerity, and candour of our critics; we must believe on their mere dictum that Christ's death wants force of intellectual character. We must not think that Secularism is carping and fault-finding in its spirit. We must not doubt that it is full of generosity and candour, even when it forms an opinion in reference to Christ, not from what the evangelists say, but from what they do not say. We have heard men speak of a character above suspicion; and had thought that nothing but the strongest proofs ought to shake our confidence in one who has hitherto been known to us for all that is noble, and benevolent, and pure; we had supposed, too, that truth and justice require that we examine any apparently doubtful actions in the light of well known character. This, however, must not be done; and silence, in the eye of suspicion, is regarded as a reason for con-

sidering the intellectual bearing of Christ as not suitable for imitation. The circumstances of his death are fitted to fix attention, and to excite sympathy; and it is amazing that such a charge should be made.] Mr Holyoake objects to Christ's silence toward Pilate, when that governor asked—'What is truth?' But a question jeeringly asked, and asked without expecting or waiting for an answer, is but a slender ground for such an accusation. He who had laboured with unwearying zeal to make known to men the character of God—who had brought life and immortality to light, and who was himself the living embodiment of that truth which has shed the brightest rays of hope on man's condition and destiny, could never be unwilling to answer any useful question relevant to his great mission. Were there any evidence that Pilate waited for an answer, there might be some ground for condemnation; but even Mr Holyoake must admit that there is none. And, should it not be remembered, that the physical strength of Jesus must have been almost completely exhausted. How long had he been the greatest of sufferers—the man of sorrows and the acquaintance of grief. On the eve of his crucifixion, probably after a toilsome day, he had spoken at great length to his disciples, commending them to the care of his Father, and uttering words of kindness to cheer and animate their sinking hearts; he had passed through the dreadful agony of the garden, which, in the cool night, had brought from his wearied frame a sweat like great drops of blood, falling to the ground; he had suffered betrayal at the hands of one of his professed friends; he had been hurried away to the judgment-hall by a ruffian rabble who thirsted for his blood, to undergo a trial which was but the mockery of justice, by men who were prepared to sacrifice righteousness to expediency. In such circumstances, and surrounded by men full of hate and scorn, might not sympathy suggest that Christ could not be expected to enter upon a full answer to that question? But there is no evidence whatever that Pilate sincerely and earnestly asked the question, or that he waited for an answer. From the New Testament narrative we have every reason to believe that after tauntingly asking the question, he turned away and went out. The record is—'Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this he went out again to the Jews and saith

unto them, I find in him no fault at all.' Had Pilate found as many flaws in his character as some profess to do now, willing as he was to do the Jews a favour, he would not have felt so much hesitancy in sacrificing him to their rage. The narrative preceding this statement shows how ready Christ was to answer any reasonable and proper question put to him. The same circumstances must be taken into account in considering Christ's demeanour before Herod. There are seasons when the silence of innocence is the symptom neither of weakness nor of contempt. The anxiety of Herod to see Jesus seems to have arisen from a mere curiosity, not from desire to know his real character, or to become acquainted with the sublime truths which he taught. The sequel proves that he was only too prepared to turn all to ridicule; for with his men of war he set him at nought, and mocked him. Neither of the rulers seems to have determined that justice should be done; they succumbed to the feelings and wishes of the people, and gave him up to a furious rabble, protesting, at the same time, that he was not worthy of death. Pilate washed his hands and declared that he was free from the innocent blood of that righteous one. It was not necessary, then, that Jesus should attempt his own justification. The minds of both the governors were penetrated with a conviction of Christ's innocence. Their consciences testified that he had done nothing worthy of death. They even made a public effort to secure his liberation; but the voice of conscience was drowned in the louder clamours of expediency. If the patience and magnanimity of Jesus did not, it is difficult to say what would melt his enemies, and amid the wild excitement of those who were clamouring for his blood the voice of reason could not be heard.

It is objected that Christ cannot be a model for us, because his life was not like ours. We are told that he is not a suitable model for our imitation, unless he was subject to the peculiar privations of the people of this day. The idea is held up to ridicule that he can be our exemplar, if the circumstances in which he was placed are not identical with ours. It is not sufficient that Christ was poor, that he was despised and maltreated, that all his life he was a sufferer, that he was tempted in all points as we are, that his sympathies were all with the poor and the down-trodden, that he was ever the advocate of the widow's and the

orphan's rights, that his most withering but just denunciations rested on the men who devoured widows' houses; Secularism does its best to estrange from him the sympathies of the working classes, because he did not occupy their very position. It comes to the world with this generous and wonderful doctrine that we can find no model for moral imitation except from persons in our own sphere, and in our identical circumstances! It asks, If Christ has to be our exemplar, why have we not a full account of his private life—what kind of master he had as a carpenter, and whether his wages amounted to so many shillings a week? This is the evidence that it comes to the examination of the character of Jesus in no cavilling fault-finding spirit! It would be satisfied if we said that Christ was an example to the people of his own time, but it cannot brook the demand that he should be taken for a model by us. Now, can a man not be an example to another unless he occupies the very same position? Can he not be an example to another in nobleness of mind, in gentleness of spirit, in earnestness of purpose, in vigour of soul, in purity, in justice, in truth, in meekness under injuries, in heroic endurance of suffering, in an invincible will to do right, in calm submission to the divine will, and joyous confidence in the divine rule, in unwearying forbearance and universal benevolence? Can he not be an example in all that is noble and God-like, without occupying precisely similar circumstances? Mr Holyoake's appeal was to working men; and I would enquire, Are there not thousands of the sons of toil, who have found, in the example of Christ, the most blessed consolation in adversity, and the most beneficial mental and moral stimulus under depressing cares? Are there not thousands who owe their moral peace, their mental independency, their bodily health, and their worldly prosperity to the influence which the study of Christ's character has exerted upon their minds amid circumstances that would otherwise have unmanned them? Are there not myriads of working men who can testify that in meditating on the history of Jesus, and in imbibing his spirit, they have acquired an energy which has borne them above many of the difficulties of their career, and enabled them to master their circumstances? The influence of Christ's character and example has raised many above the most crushing cares, has chased away repining and

sadness from many a heart, has lifted up those who were sinking under a load of sin to goodness and to God, and has lighted up the homes of the poor with the sunshine of heaven.

I am certain that truth and candour would draw a picture of the character of Christ very different from that which has been presented to us to-night. Whatever may be said of his intellectuality, his moral character stands out in lustrous glory as an example to the world. His advent formed a moral epoch in the history of our race. He commenced a great era in the moral and spiritual development of man. There was nothing in the prevailing ideas of his age or country to account for his teachings and life. Surrounded by a people who looked upon themselves as the favourites of Heaven, he told them that God loved the world. The Jews regarded their temple as the only Zion of God; Christ taught that the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and truth, and that the Father seeketh such to worship him. With hearts narrowed by prejudice and fettered by bigotry, they deemed themselves the exclusive people of God. Jesus came to establish an empire of love which might embrace men of every land and of every tongue. In the carrying out of his object, he courted not the favour of the wealthy, nor the influence of the powerful, he sought to rally around him men of principle, who would exercise self-denial for the salvation of others—men whose hearts had become pure, earnest, and loving, under the power of his gospel. Alone in his work, single-handed in his encounter with our spiritual adversaries, unsupported by human sympathy, deserted by his friends, assailed in bitterest rage by his enemies, he was not moved from his purpose, he never wavered in the path of duty. Strong in himself, he waited not for circumstances to help him. With a devotedness of energy, an invincibility of will, and a heroic endurance that have never been equalled, he engaged in the great work of the world's emancipation from the tyranny of selfishness and the thraldom of sin. Yet with all his energy, and all his severity toward sin, he was full of gentleness to the suffering, and full of sympathy for the oppressed. Without anything austere in his appearance, or repulsive in his manner, he possessed attractions which, but for sin, must have drawn all around him. With a deep consciousness of exalted dignity and infinite superiority, he

moved among men as one of ourselves, mingling familiarly, conversing freely, with his disciples, and treating them as friends. He even sought to breathe upon them and to cherish within them his own self-sacrificing spirit. Therefore he lived among them as a man, a brother, and not unfrequently as a servant. He would have no barrier between him and them. He sought fully to identify himself with humanity in its utmost poverty, that he might be alike accessible to all; that he might pour upon all the fulness of his sympathy; that the most abject and degraded might not feel repulsed by his perfect sanctity; that the most sinful and sorrowing spirit might feel confident of finding in him a friend and a brother. His philanthropy pervaded his whole life, and shone forth in greatest splendour when he gave himself up as a sacrifice for human transgression. The philanthropy of Jesus was no mere sentimentalism; it laboured for man's temporal good and physical well-being. He gave feet to the lame and eyes to the blind; the ears of the deaf were unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb sang for joy in his presence. Truly might it be said of him that he bore our sicknesses. The widow receives her dead son back to life. The broken circle of Bethany is re-united by the restoration of the dead. Illustrations, all, of what the gospel may do for lost man. Not failing to commiserate man's weakness and suffering, his philanthropy saw, in the depravity of man's soul, the deep fountain of his miseries, and, by the most amazing self-sacrifice, sought to heal the inner springs of his being, and to lead him to a pure, perennial, and all-satisfying happiness. He sought to dry up the streams of human misery at their very source, to reach the very core of human woe. His philanthropy was not for one age or for one country, but for all lands and for all time. It has produced wide and indelible impressions on many peoples, and is now felt in its merely social and political influences in almost every kingdom of earth. Even where Christianity has not been received, it has been silently but powerfully affecting society ever since its first promulgation to the world. Infidelity has borrowed from it all the good which it possesses; and weapons which Christianity alone can furnish are sought to be used against it. A new and higher standard of virtue has risen up before men's eyes through the teachings of Christ, and after it has elevated

and purified society, some would have us to abandon it, without replacing it by a better. Even by the adversaries of his religion, what tributes have been paid to the originality and benevolence of the Saviour's character! Till now, infidelity, while it has fiercely attacked the system, has generally shrunk from that character. Many an infidel has been unable to contemplate it without thrilling before it; and thousands have found in it an unanswerable argument for the worth of his religion. How astonishing that our friend can be moved by a few beautiful words of an ancient writer, or verses of a modern poet, and not be affected by a character that was the embodiment of the spirit of love! In the extracts which have been read, we have heard an account of Mr Newman's impressions in perusing the evangelic narrative, it may be useful to place in contrast with them the impressions, from the same source, produced in the mind of Rousseau, and no one will think of charging him with bigotry in favour of Jesus. They may be regarded as an answer to the severe reflections which you have heard to-night, and are all the more weighty that they are uttered by one who was an enemy of the cross.

'I will confess to you,' says he, 'that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible are they compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discoveries! What presence of mind, what sublimity, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man—where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man, loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ; the resemblance was so striking, that

all the fathers perceived it. What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophronicus to the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion there is between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice; he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just, before Socrates defined justice; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigotted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people upon earth.] The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophising with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonising pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it; it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that only one should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be

a more astonishing character than the hero.' Such is the testimony which the very sublimity and grandeur of Christ's character extorted from a witness whom even infidels must regard as unprejudiced; and I envy not the moral sensibility of the man who can read that character only in the light of suspicion, and who is obliged to confess that there are not sufficient materials in the evangelic narratives to warrant his decision. Though some have done their utmost to represent Christ as not a suitable model for moral imitation in the present day, the great leveller Time has not effected any change in the impressions which his character is fitted to produce. Society, as a whole, has greatly advanced in civilisation and refinement since Christ taught in the streets of Jerusalem, in the plains of Judea, and among the hills of Galilee; but his character still rises above every other, and will be an example for men in the highest states of civilisation and intellectual progress. Men of the greatest purity, integrity, and benevolence of life have felt, that in the character of Jesus they have found the highest stimulus to moral excellence and the strongest reproof of their deficiencies. The longer they have studied that character they have seen in it the more of moral beauty and symmetry. Zeal for God and benevolence to man were harmonisingly blended. He went about doing his Father's business. He lived only to accomplish his will. At all times and in all circumstances his whole energy was bent to the accomplishment of the work which the Father gave him to do. It is impossible to conceive of anything more sublime than the unity of his purpose. The shadow of imposture gathers not about him. There was no self-deluding enthusiasm, no aiming to be, no attempt to work upon the prejudices and passions of the people. Amid all the excitement which surrounded him, the calm, genial, dignified spirit of his religion shines forth unbroken. Though possessing all knowledge of the future, he neither sought to gratify a prurient curiosity, nor to give those minute descriptions of the unseen state as would have given him power over a certain class of minds. In his revelations of the future he invariably considered man's wants and welfare. Notwithstanding the severity of his trials, and the unfathomable depth of his sufferings, how unfaltering was his trust in God! How profound was his submission to his Father's will; and how

unmurmuring his patience under accumulated wrongs and anguish! Even amid the awful agony that wrung his soul in the garden, in seeking that for a season the cup might pass from him, he thrice added the memorable and melting words, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' How calm, yet how deep his piety as breathed in his prayers, and as evidenced in retiring from the multitudes for communion with his Father. And his benevolence to man was not a fitful dream. It shone forth with increasing splendour to the close of his earthly career. Calm amid all his trials and persecutions, the desertions of friends and the calumnies and reproaches of foes, his serenity and self-possession never forsook him, because undying love bore him forward in his work. When all the weight of a world's curse rested upon him, and when the darkness of the deepest sorrow o'ershadowed his soul, he did not forget to pray for his murderers. No, there was no charlatanry about Christ; his life was all transparent and real. And think of the work which he set before him—to save man from sin; to break for ever the power of iniquity over the human heart; to lay a foundation in the moral government of God for the pardon of the transgressor; to turn him back to the Father from whom he has wandered; to enlighten man's path to immortality, to teach him the true dignity of his nature as a free and an immortal being; to unlock to him spiritual treasures which would make him rich for eternity, to discipline his moral nature, to pour into his spirit the balm of heavenly love, to elevate, and purify, and ennoble, and glorify the whole man. He came to destroy the empire of selfishness, and to establish on its ruins the kingdom of universal love. The vaguest conception of such a thing had never entered the mind of any legislator or poet of antiquity; but he ever acted as if it ere an idea with which he was perfectly familiar. Nor did he confine his benevolent scheme to one nation. 'He came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' When we think of the meaning of his words, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'—'I am come to seek and to save that which was lost,'—what a view bursts upon us of the grandeur of his mission and work! And how does he stand out before us as the model of true greatness, when he tells us that 'the Son of

man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life for the world;' teaching us that the test of true greatness is not the numbers that serve us, but the numbers that we serve. The lowliness of his spirit shines through his whole life. He does not come in regal splendour; he does not attempt to assume a position of honour among men; he does not aim at earthly distinctions; he pays no deference to the authority of powerful and wicked men; he knew nothing of caste, he only knew man; all distinctions of riches and poverty seem to fade away before the view of his eternal destiny. You find him a poor carpenter —a working man; showing how little circumstances have to do with character, and how noble the poorest may become. He was familiar with privations and toils. He knew what it was to hunger and fast; and often must he have travelled on in pain and fatigue, till compelled from physical exhaustion to rest awhile, as he did at the well of Sychar. How deep and tender was his sympathy for man! His own peculiar sorrows were forgotten to speak consoling words to others. When the mothers of Israel brought little children to him, he took them into his arms and blessed them. They awakened the deepest yearning of his soul. Never was such beauty thrown around childhood; never did it excite so deep an interest. He would gather around it the most watchful and tender solicitude of his church, by the assurance, 'He that receiveth a little child in my name receiveth me.' There was no class of human beings so fallen as to be beneath his notice. The publicans and sinners flocked around him; and though Scribes and Pharisees murmured, angels rejoiced. The most abandoned met with no repulse from him. He welcomed them to the rich storehouse of eternal love. The weakest might not tremble in his presence, for he would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. When he beheld the multitude faiuting he had compassion on them, because they were scattered as sheep without a shepherd. When he saw Mary weeping at the grave of her brother Lazarus, he wept also. Even at the midnight hour anxiety might find its way into his presence. No depth of depravity, no combination of crimes could steal his heart. Guilt left its burden at his feet; and at the sight of him penitence dried her tears. The betrayer is met with the meek

and melting question—Friend, wherefore art thou come? for love would win him to the last. A look of kindness is the only rebuke to Peter when he has denied his master. He has only tears for the infatuated inhabitants of Jerusalem. On the eve of his crucifixion, with all his sufferings full in view, he institutes an ordinance commemorative of his love, and by a discourse of deepest tenderness and pathos, prepares his disciples for the trials that await them. Though ready to sink beneath the heavy cross, the women of Jerusalem share his sympathy, and he says, 'Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children.' Amid his expiring agonies he forgets not his aged mother, but directs her for help and refuge to John. Ere he breathes his last, his heart unburdens itself for his murderers, and he prays—'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!' In the words of another may we not exclaim—'Jesus of Nazareth who can declare thee! thou wast the heart of infinite love, beating and bleeding for human happiness! How didst thou consult our wants and adapt thyself to our condition! Among the ignorant thou wast the light of life; when surrounded by the needy thou wast the fulness of the Godhead. When didst thou disregard the cry of suppliant misery? In thee wisdom and goodness were in conjunction with holiness and power. All who treated with thee, tasted of goodness, of divinity; thy virtues were dowries sufficient to enrich a world; thy character was glory set in grace.'

Mr Holyoake takes objection to the passage in the ninth of Mark in which Christ has decribed the appalling consequences of transgression. He asserts that its influence is disastrous. Now how can it be disastrous to warn any man of the fearful results of continuance in sin? Is it not equally the dictate of wisdom and of kindness? What is the scope of the whole paragraph which he has read? Is it not to illustrate the tremendous evil of sin? Does Christ not show us that there is no degree of self-denial to which we should not readily submit, rather than commit sin, and thus bring upon ourselves the fearful and interminable woe which is its consequence? Does he not seek to teach that sin is the greatest evil? that there is not an evil in the universe for a moment to be compared with it? that the loss of a limb, of an eye, or of any of the members of the human body,

—that any other physical evil which man may suffer, is not once to be compared with sin? All bodily pain, poverty, affliction, destitution, and ill-success, are not to be mentioned along with it. A man may be plunged into the depths of beggary, and yet retain his moral peace and his mental independence, but when he yields himself up to sin, peace flees from his breast, and he becomes an abject slave. A man's body may be racked with suffering, without any beclouding of his spirit's joy, but sin robs him at once of his happiness and his hope. He may sustain the heaviest losses, and yet walk erect in the consciousness of integrity, but when he sins he loses self-respect, and becomes degraded in his own eyes. Nothing but sin can poison the springs of man's being; it alone can shut up a soul in the dungeon of despair; it alone can completely darken the horizon of the soul, and shut out for ever the smile of God. There is no sacrifice which a man ought not to make, no suffering which a man ought not to endure, rather than yield to sin. The conclusions of unbiassed reason must here be in harmony with the teachings of Christ. We all feel that it would be better for a man to sacrifice a throne than to abandon a principle; and when judgment speaks, we feel that any enjoyment secured at the cost of wrong-doing, is infinitely too dear. Vice cannot stand one calm look. No sin can bear to be thought about, and men therefore seek to forget their sins as soon as possible. Our own experience teaches us how blighting, how scathing is its influence. Nor have we the shadow of a reason to conclude that death purifies the mind; present sin may therefore entail future pollution. Who can doubt, then, that it is the thing of all others which should be dreaded and avoided? If it is wiser to cut off a right arm or to pluck out a right eye, rather than that physical death should ensue, it is certainly wiser to part with the most valued objects rather than that the soul should sink to eternal woe. Partial mutilation is better than entire destruction; and so any self-denial is better than the sacrifice of the deathless spirit. Look for a moment at the real effect of sin in human experience. Does it not in many cases oppress the soul like a terrible load? Does it not often bring the most fearful suffering? Does it not destroy the moral elasticity of the mind? Does it not enfeeble its best principles, and bind it with tyrant chains? Does it never make exis-

tence seem a blank; yea, has it not made men feel as if their very being was a curse, so that they could almost dance for joy at the very thought of annihilation? Is there, then, anything disastrous in showing the awful results of permitting this plague-spot to remain upon the soul—of taking into its secret chambers this poisonous reptile? Will these results be less appalling than the language in which they are described? Would despair be less terrible were it not represented under the figure of an unquenchable fire? Would remorse be less horrible without the figure of an undying worm? Nothing, certainly, can be clearer than that it were better to part with that which seems useful as a right arm, and pleasant as a right eye, than endure that anguish for ever. The great lesson which we are taught is resolutely to part with every thing which is likely to prove the occasion of sin to us, however much painful feeling the sacrifice may cost us. What present pleasure or advantage springing from sin should men not abandon, rather than be exposed to the hazard of spending an eternity in degradation and torment.

Mr Holyoake has referred so frequently to what he calls super-added punishment, that one is led to think that he has a peculiar dread of the representations of the New Testament on the subject of future retribution. But even on his own ground how can he get rid of the doctrine? It is not of the essence of Christianity, neither does it depend on revelation. The moral analogies of the present state point to future retribution as highly probable, if not absolutely certain. Can it be denied that it is possible for a man to carry with him into the future world his character, his thoughts, his principles of conduct, his soul habitudes, and his propensities; and if these are all sinful, will they not prove wrathful elements of his eternal destiny? Have we no illustrations of the tyrant power of habit in the present life? A man begins to sin; in a few years we find him fearfully hardened, and in a few more years his case may seem almost desperate and hopeless. His soul may be so completely saturated with sin, and his habits may become so powerful, that he feels as if it were impossible that he could resist temptation. In the present life, therefore, he is miserable; as time rolls over him without bringing any change of moral condition, and carrying with him into the future state a nature that is depraved to the core—

arguing from analogy, independent of Scripture testimony—is it not certain that he has within him the elements of the most fearful anguish that can be endured by man? Is there any reason to hope that his character already formed, will become better, or that all the laws of his moral nature will be reversed in the future world? Sin frequently produces remorse, and would do so universally and invariably but for the moral torpor into which the mind is sometimes lulled. It has this effect long years after it has been committed. That solemn judgment of the conscience on its own acts, indicates that we are under a just moral administration. Now, if a sin committed to-day produces remorse fifty years hence, why may it not a hundred thousand? Who can prevent it if memory remain? And who can prove that it will not? How oft upon a dying bed, does the memory seem to attain new power, and the misdeeds of a lifetime stand before the mental eye, as an immense catalogue of guilt! Yea, then, how often will the very thoughts and purposes of the heart, among the things of the past, stand out in dark and painful relief! And, as it is admitted to be dogmatism to say there is no future life, no man can assure himself that memory may not become ten thousand times more powerful; and thus, in the remembrances of the past, there would be fuel to feed the flame of remorse for ever. Conscience, too, awakened to a clear perception of the evil of sin, may strike its scorpion-sting into the soul. We see not, then, why the combination of increased moral pravity in the future, with the remembrances of the past, should not be hell enough to the soul. Physical suffering can scarcely be necessary to fill up the cup of woe to the brim. Is it, then, unrighteous in God to determine that this life shall be the only period of probation; to determine that what a man sows here, he shall reap hereafter; and at last, as Moral Governor, to express his supreme displeasure in fixing the final destiny of those who continue to violate his law and reject his gospel? But at this point Mr Holyoake falls back upon the assertion, which he can never prove, that God has made man so that he could not avoid sinning. Sin, or the transgression of a law, implies the perfect moral freedom of its subject. Were man the plaything of an iron necessity, there could be no responsibility and no sin. Sin could only be known by the law. To have left us without

law, would be unspeakably worse than to rob us of existence. The Creator alone was capable of giving law to man. It was necessary that he should express, in the sanctions of his law, the amount of his regard for the precept, and his estimate of its value in promoting the highest good of his creatures. None will be prepared to deny that perfect obedience should be rewarded with the perpetual favour of the lawgiver; nor is it less capable of proof, that sin must be punished. To allow one sin to pass without his marked disapprobation, would be as fatal to Jehovah's rule and to the interests of the moral universe, as to allow perfect obedience to remain unrewarded. Man has sinned and exposed himself to the law's penalty. In mercy God has interposed to save him. If he will not have the provided remedy, the consequences are with him as the result of his own choice. If Mr Holyoake denies that man has any choice in the matter, let him say so. He talks sometimes as if God had made man liable to sin, and then condemned him eternally for being so. Has God, indeed, created man so that he cannot help sinning? Is God the author of sin? Has God created both the sin and its consequences? The Bible says, No. Our own consciences say, No. Both unite in testifying that man has been created a free agent. In his freedom he has chosen to break the Divine law. God has interposed for his salvation, man neglects or despises the remedy, and thus he perishes, not because God wills it, but as the fruit of his own choice.

Mr HOLYOAKE:—If rhapsodies were argument Mr Rutherford would be a great logician and a pertinent debater, but he is apt to preach where he ought to reason, and to reiterate what I have said and put that before us as an answer. How strangely he confuses the plain meaning of terms and misunderstands the position we occupy in this controversy. For instance, he sat down by saying that if a man despises the offer of God and chooses the consequences of sin, why should those consequences not happen to him? Does he not see this is, unintentionally, but in fact, a libellous statement of his own? We do not 'despise' these offers—we are not able to believe in them; we do not 'choose' these punishments—we do not believe it is consonant with the moral character of God that these punishments should ever be threatened us. A single question will brush away the

evangelical cobweb of words in which my friend sometimes indulges: Are the terrible consequences of which he speaks the natural consequences of sin? If so, between him and ourselves there is no debate, and a war of words is needless. The terrible conseqnences of sin in the New Testament mean superadded punishment by the devil and his angels—this is what the scriptural passages mean, or they mean nothing. But Mr Rutherford speaks as though he agreed with us, whilst standing here to argue against us. He talks of remorse following crime as the consequences of wrong-doing, which I do not deny; on the contrary, we perpetually enforce the natural consequences of evil to induce men not to do evil—we are perpetually saying that virtue is its own reward, in order that men may be virtuous. What answer is it to me to say that God merely threatens the natural consequences of sin, when the argument turns entirely on whether there is superadded an independent, supplementary, personal addition of punishment by fire with the devil and his angels? If Mr Rutherford denies that there is any such additional punishment, why does he not say so openly and clearly, and then there would be an end of argument on the subject. This has always been our difficulty with the orthodox, but we must continue to press the question until we get an express answer—whether the punishment of sin is merely its natural consequences, or whether it is to be pronounced as a judgment against us.

Mr Rutherford asks—May not Christ be an example of magnanimity and endurance to a man without having lived exactly his life? Again he adopts my words. I said all this explicitly, and said, moreover, that in a hundred instances Christ was a glorious example—that I admired many of his precepts and applaud the heroism of his life, but there were points in his character and history to which I objected, and which Mr Rutherford has not justified, nor attempted to justify. He has merely adduced the points on which we do not disagree, as answers to those on which we do disagree. I referred to Socrates, whose life was, in many respects, far more instructive to us than that of Christ; and I claim the right of learning from any great teacher, whether Confucius, Socrates, Goethe, or Shakspeare. I say they are all equally models for human instruc-

tion, and that Christ did not arrogate to himself the sum of human perfection, that he is not the absolute and only model to which men ought to look, and that it is not criminal to direct their attention elsewhere or to any other. My friend says, I have admitted that man has sinned, and he puts a strange construction (with which I do not agree) upon what sin means. I agree that man has 'sinned,' because I hold here no idle war as to words; but my friend surely understands that I have three nights long denied that man has committed or can commit such 'sin' as shall merit the superadded punishment spoken of in the New Testament.

When referring to Pilate, my friend said that he turned away without waiting to hear Christ's answer. Why does he say so? The Scriptures do not warrant the statement. My friend is evidently not well read as to Pilate's history, or he would have known that Pilate was a friend of Christ's, that he esteemed him as a just man, tried to avoid his condemnation, and even appealed to him for advice and instruction. Mr Rutherford says, Pilate spoke tauntingly to Christ, whereas the whole narrative shows that his conduct was most respectful towards Christ, and that he endeavoured to save him. But, passing over the surface of these three nights' controversy, Mr Rutherford appears to have overlooked that he is here to instruct myself and friends on the reasons why Christianity should be, as a whole, accepted—to show us that the character of Christ is, in all respects, to us a perfect model and example; for if Christ be not a perfect model, an absolute example—if we may consider him eclectically, then my objection does not exist, because it is admitted. If Mr Rutherford adopts the special and absolute ground, we have a right to press him, and to ask for a distinct rejoinder to the various points which I have brought before him.

My friend has spoken to us of saving faith, but he has never told us what saving faith is. We want a brief, unambiguous, practical, pertinent, and authorised definition of saving faith; he has not given us this, nor any moral reason why a belief in good works is not as virtuous as a belief in the gospel. We say it would be more moral and publicly useful if ministers preached God's approbation of good works, instead of sound believing in the Bible, and Mr Rutherford has not shown the contrary on any ground which

statesmen or philosophers can accept. He has said that we need pardon for sin, but he has not shown us (which was the point of controversy) that *conscientious disbelief in religion is sin.* He assumes that I am here to justify felons, rogues, and scoundrels, whereas I am here to justify men as honest and as sincere as himself, whose only crime is that they cannot think as he does. Your pulpits say *that* is sin—we say it is *not* sin, and that you libel God, and give a premium to hypocrisy, by pretending it is sin. My friend has overlooked this argument, and given us no clear instruction on the subject. He has not told us how we are to derive moral instruction from studying the Gods unless they act on the same moral principles as men do. I have asked, is not that ambiguous which needs reconciling—is not that impracticable which nobody practices—is not that disastrous in preceptive teaching which leads to results that misdirect and appal us? I have further asked, is eternal punishment a literal or metaphorical doctrine as taught in the New Testament? These are points to which his attention has been directed, and it is for him, on these matters, to give some clear and explicit answer, if he would instruct us. We wish to be relieved from the imputation which has rested upon us that we are not willing to see the truth, and we desire that you should have the benefit of a comparison of opinions, that you may judge for yourselves where the truth lies. I am afraid when my friend goes home (I don't know whether he is a sound churchman or not), he will have occasion to repeat that part of the Common Prayer which says he has done those things which he ought not to have done, and left undone much that he ought to have done.

I pass to another point which you will see is of importance. I have claimed here throughout the right to judge the Holy Scriptures eclectically; I am not here objecting to them altogether finding fault with all their excellencies or denying that instruction or wisdom may be gathered therefrom—I am simply pleading for the right to take such parts as are useful to us, and to leave those parts which are morally misleading. Now Mr Rutherford has taken a liberty with the Scriptures which he is not prepared to allow me to take; I only ask to be allowed the same privilege which he has exercised. As I before said, all reconciling of Scripture is adopting one part and cancelling another. If

you hold that to be innocent in my friend, why, I ask, should the moral judgment of man be directed against us for doing the same thing—for using the Scriptures eclectically? I know that in the last chapter of the New Testament the Apostle John tells us, whoever shall take away from or add to that book, his name shall be taken out of the Book of Life; yet Mr Rutherford did not scruple to add words to the book. I reminded him that Christ told the woman taken in adultery to go and sin no more, on which Mr Rutherford said the sentence ought to read, 'Neither do I condemn thee, *therefore* go and sin no more.' My friend introduces the word 'therefore,' and founds a new system of theology on the very word. I do not object to my friend doing this, if it lets in light upon the passage; I only claim that he would not be harsh towards us when we feel compelled to do so—that he would give us the same license he is obliged to take himself.

The supplementary point I wish to mention is (and you can reflect upon it when away from this meeting), that my opponent has not once betrayed during his speeches (delivered as they have been in an earnest manner and a fair spirit, I am ready to allow, what we had a right to expect) a distinct and intelligent recognition of the ground on which this controversy reposes. He has told me that theology takes into account the character and vicarious mission of Christ, and assumed I had said that upon this ground there was an objection to be made to the character of Christ. He has delivered his last speech on the supposition that it is fair to defend, in this argument, the character of Christ in reference to his evangelical mission, whilst your churches have been accepting, indirectly for half a century, and directly for the last ten years, the discussion of these truths on the *moral* ground; and I say (putting aside, as I do throughout, the mission of Christ, and his Divine character,) tried by the morality of common men, the instincts of the human heart, and the judgment of mankind, Christ is not a model for our instruction—an absolute example of moral perfection. You must lay aside your theological grounds, and come down to the ground of reason where I join issue with you. Mr Rutherford has not understood this to be his duty; he has not comprehended the ground on which the controversy rests, and the reasons by which it will eventually be determined. Has he forgotten the early history of

his own religion? How did the apostles and the first fathers of Christianity overcome the Pagans and put down their gods? Simply by showing that the morality of the Pagan gods was not the morality of common sense; that there were actions of theirs which they dared not or could not imitate; and that it was immoral to pretend, because they were gods, they might act on principles different from those by which humanity itself is or should be regulated. That was the old challenge of Christianity to the Pagan world; by it its battles were fought and victories won; and the challenge is a fair one still, which Mr Rutherford ought to have accepted. He has not done so; for when he tells us that Christ uttered the noble principle of unlimited forgiveness, and that God will not act on the *same* principle—that we are to forgive our enemies, but that God will not do so likewise, because he is infinitely wise, or his scheme of justice is beyond comprehension, he is having recourse to the Pagan argument, that the gods are above human judgment, and act differently from ourselves; and I have a right to reply, that he is guilty of the old Pagan immorality. Hence, mystifying the moral judgments of the world, and setting before us principles of action which God himself does not recognise, men have gone year after year, and age after age, preaching a system of morality for man which man never reduces to practice.

Things will never be better, until you have the courage to recast your evangelical and religious morality, and bring it down to the level of, and identify it with, common humanity—until you recast the judgments of the Divine will, and teach men that the gods act on the broad and sublime principles which you lay down for human guidance; and when there is thus harmony between earth and heaven, man and God, then the public will be instructed—then every preacher will speak right home to the hearts of the people—then we shall have unity, and no more need for reconcilements, no more need for a barbarous image of a God punishing while man forgives,—we shall have one simple and eloquent principle given to all men, to forgive, for God forgives; to be kind, for he is kind; to love and study mercy and fraternity, because God is an infinite enlargement of all perfections, and will himself do the same things in a more sublime,

extended, and enlarged manner. And here I answer Mr Rutherford's question—Would I assure people that if they adopted my views they would be safe?—If they think as I think, by what guarantee can I assure them that God will accept their conduct? We give you the same argument which your forefathers used when they reasoned with the Pagans. They told the Pagans to appeal to their own hearts, and not to impute to the gods conduct which would degrade themselves; they said the gods would never do that which they morally dared not do; and we say to you—no man would think of punishing his friend for ever, no man would dare to contemplate visiting with superadded eternal punishment any crime committed even by his enemy. Take care you do not impute to God a depravity and demoralisation of which you would be yourselves ashamed. Act on the principles which I have endeavoured to explain, since that which it is best and noblest for us to do will unquestionably be, in an infinitely nobler degree, the course that God will pursue; and you can only secure the judgment of men when you teach that the precepts of humanity and those of Heaven coincide and harmonise with each other.

Mr RUTHERFORD then rose to conclude the debate. The interest was most intense, and he was loudly applauded. He said:—Ladies and gentlemen, I can assure you that in this debate I have not sought to avoid the consideration of any objection to Christianity that my friend has urged; while I have endeavoured to avoid everything that might lead to personalities and bad feeling. It is for you to judge whether I have misunderstood the position of Secularism, and whether I have substituted rhapsodies for argument. It is for you to consider whether Mr Holyoake has made out his charges against Christianity, and whether he has anything to give us that would exert a higher moral influence. In his last speech he has reiterated several questions which have already been answered in the course of this discussion, and brought up again arguments which have more than once been met. As it may be useful, however, I am willing, as far as time permits, to answer them once more, and to review the whole. We have nothing to fear from the most sifting investigation of the moral worth of Christianity. Such investigation will only

increase its claims on our grateful acceptance and diligent study. Mr Holyoake wants a brief and practical definition of saving faith, and alleges that I have never told him what it is. Now, those who have been here each night of the debate, will remember that I have already given as distinct and clear a definition as I could. Saving faith is the belief of that gospel which sanctifies, elevates, and purifies the soul, securing its deliverance from sin's consequences, and from sin itself; and that gospel is briefly stated in the golden sentence—'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' This truth produces a complete moral renovation in the mind; therefore it is a saving truth, and the belief of it is saving faith. Mr Holyoake says that I have not given any moral reason why a belief in the gospel is better than a belief in Secularism or any other system. Now, I think that in proving, as I have done, both from experience and observation that the gospel when believed, produces more delightful moral results on human hearts and lives than any other system, I *do* give such a reason. In stating the benign and permanent effects of a reception of the gospel on natures so hopelessly depraved, in his estimation, that society can be saved from their attacks only by physical restraint, every man who is not steeled against the force of truth, must feel that I gave a weighty moral reason why the belief of the gospel is better than any other belief. In treating the necessity of faith in order to justification, ministers do not preach God's disapprobation of good works, but point out the only way in which those good works can be produced, on which the great Judge of all will look with complacency. The most moral and the most useful preaching is that which touches the springs of human action, by the presentation of right conceptions of the character of God. Sound believing in the great doctrines of the Bible is the parent of sound character and useful conduct. A life of faith on Jesus, as the propitiation for our sins, and the exponent of infinite love to us, will be a life of devotion to God, and of usefulness to man. By the mildest induction of facts it can be shown that the belief of the gospel gives man a new and a nobler nature, and this is not a ground which any philosopher or man of common sense can reject. The point of controversy is, whether a man can be justified before

God by his conduct; and the admission that man has sinned is fatal to the theory, else the law is imperfect, or the lawgiver connives at its violation. To say that any man who has done wrong can be justified in this way, is to lower his estimate of the law and its sanctions, and to lead to immorality. The Christian doctrine, on the contrary, leaves on the mind the deepest sense of the purity of the law, and of the infinite justice of the Moral Governor of the universe. The comparative value of mere moralism and living Christianity in producing real goodness, is strikingly illustrated in the experience of the late Dr Chalmers. Those of you who have read the life of that admirable man will remember the account which he gives, in his own striking manner, of the effects of the two systems as they appeared under his own eye during the twelve years of his labours in Kilmany. During the first seven of those years he had regarded with suspicion, if not with aversion, the doctrine of justification by faith in the alone sacrifice for sin fearing that it would prove adverse to the interests of virtue and, practical righteousness in the world; and had devoted all the energy of his great intellect to the enunciation of moral precepts. In the most vivid manner he had sought to depict the evils of sin and the beauties of virtue; to allure them to the one by all its present benefits, and to deter them from the other by all the miseries which follow in its train. With all the fervour of his manly eloquence he had laboured to turn them from the error of their ways. He had expatiated on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny. He had pressed upon the people the reformations of truth, and honour, and integrity. He had endeavoured to speak right home to their hearts in exposing the follies and miseries of sin. With all the earnestness and eloquence of which he was capable, he had sought to make the people of his charge better citizens and virtuous men. And he makes the confession that it was all in vain—that he had spent his labour for nought. In all that period, during which he had urged with unabating vehemence the virtues and proprieties of social life, he did not know of a solitary individual in the parish that had become morally better for all his labour; and he might have continued it to his dying day with no better success. He confesses—and the confession shows

how powerless are moral precepts without a gospel of forgiveness to cheer, and a Spirit of love to quicken the guilty soul—he confesses that they had not the weight of a feather upon the moral habits of his parishioners. At length, however, his own mind opened up to the glorious scheme of mercy—the provision for man's forgiveness and moral elevation in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Having proved the source of peace and of enlargement to his own heart, it soon became the distinct and prominent theme of his ministrations; and he had not for many months preached a full, free, and present salvation to the people when he knew of more than one entirely renewed in the spirit of their mind, and marked an entire change in the moral aspect of his parish. The result of this real though undesigned experiment was that the simple exhibition of God's infinite love in the gift of his Son produces permanent moral results, such as have never flowed from the most impressive and eloquent teachings of mere moralism, however pure. This is but one of a thousand illustrations that might be adduced. Now here I think we have a moral reason why the belief of the gospel is better than a belief in any other system. We cannot enjoy any of the benefits of Secularism without a belief in its principles, and we prefer the gospel, because it has been tested in the experience of thousands, and has everywhere, and in all circumstances, produced the most benign and glorious effects on human character.

The question that I have already answered—'Can a man perish, when his disbelief is conscientious?' is asked again. My reply is, that in a thousand cases in every-day life a man's conscientiousness saves him neither from the fruits of false ideas nor of improper conduct. If, when afflicted with a painful malady, you either despise or reject the only known remedy, your conscientiousness will not ward off the consequences. We cannot believe that sincerity, at the bar of God, will be a substitute for sinlessness. You tell me that you cannot accept the offers of mercy. Why? Is it because they are not needed, or because they seem insincere, or because they do not come to you supported by sufficient evidence? We are told that men do not choose the punishment of sin. Well; if they were consulted, would they choose that *any* misery should be the fruit of their wrong-doing? Would they not prefer that it ever should be crowned with success and

be productive of pleasure? Why should either the threatening or the infliction of punishment be regarded as inconsistent with the character of God, when we see iniquity frequently entailing shame and suffering and ruin in the present life? Do we not see the elements of God's judgments of men frequently now? Who can prove that it is unrighteous in the Moral Governor of the Universe to express, in the highest conceivable manner, his displeasure at sin? How is it that sin has what are called *natural* consequences? Is it not according to the arrangement of God? And would not any objection to the punitve results of sin in the future life equally militate against the present consequences of sin? If it is not wrong in God to permit the one, is it unjust in him to inflict the other? If the one is not inconsistent with his character, who can make it out that the other is? Who can object that the Judge of all should consign men eternally to the society of beings to whom they have become morally assimilated, and whose evil example they have followed? Why should they not be punished at last with the devil and his angels, when they have acted from the same principles and prepared themselves for the same end. If selfishness has been their prevailing moral characteristic, why should it not be allowed its development in the future state? and if it cannot be eradicated by moral means, why should it not be confined in its action to one locality in the universe? It is easy to deny that man has committed or can commit any sin to merit the punishment which the New Testament threatens; it will not be so easy to prove it. The Moral Governor of the Universe alone can decide what punishment man incurs in the violation of his laws, for he alone can fully estimate the intrinsic evil and the blighting tendencies of sin. Mr Holyoake, in words, admits the existence of sin, but, in fact, denies it, in blaming the Creator for man's nature and circumstances. If Lord Campbell had created the criminal whom he condemns, so that he could not avoid the commission of crime, all right-minded men would reprobate and reverse his judgment; but can Mr Holyoake prove that this is the position of the Moral Governor of the universe? Do not the stern facts of universal consciousness, and the unbiassed judgments of human consciences, flatly contradict the supposition? Ought not he, who is constantly com-

plaining that the Divine displeasure at sin is manifested in the infliction of punishment, to address himself to this great question? Ought he not to give up his appeals to men's feelings until he brings us some arguments to prove that God makes men what they are in moral condition? Have we had a shred of evidence from him that man is so constituted and circumstanced that he cannot avoid wrong-doing? Have any grounds been stated on which we can reasonably expect that sin will be followed by no punishment? Are we not under moral law? Does not observation as well as experience testify that we are? Mr Holyoake does not venture to deny this great fact. Nor can he show that the law, as recorded in the page of inspiration, is either unrighteous or unreasonable. It is as good as it is just. We can no more conceive of law without an author, than without a subject. There must be a lawgiver. Laws are the expression of an intelligent mind. A law is powerless without a sanction. By sanctions the lawgiver expresses the value of the enactment. Mr Holyoake admits that the moral laws under which we are placed have what are called natural sanctions; but if all were mere chance—if there were no supreme and intelligent lawgiver, how do you account for the existence even of such sanctions, why do you not sometimes find virtue resulting in misery, and vice in happiness—how is it that sin invariably brings degradation and destroys moral peace? Is it not the will of the lawgiver? Does it not express his desire for the moral safety and highest welfare of his empire? And if you object to any further and future manifestation of his displeasure at sin, why do you not object to the present suffering which you admit it brings? You tell us that you will teach men the 'natural consequences' of sin to deter them from committing it; can you prove that these consequences will not reach into eternity, and be present with him during the entire period of his being? And as you believe that man is the creature of organisation and circumstances, why do you not protest against those 'natural consequences?' Why do you not represent God as miserable in witnessing all the suffering which now prevails throughout our world? Do you not forget that all that misery is as nothing compared with the happiness which flows from the existence and enforcement of moral law? Would it not be weakness rather than benevolence, in the

Moral Governor, to sacrifice the highest interests of his moral empire to individual happiness? Yea, would it not be the greatest injustice? Do you not feel the force of the argument when applied to the civil magistrate? Have you not told us that it is his duty to resist evil, not for personal gratification, but for social safety? In this case you find no difficulty in marking the distinction between the public judge and the private citizen; why should you not bear the distinction in mind when you consider God's judgments of men? Is not he the governor of a vast moral empire? Does he not govern it by righteous laws, which are supported by sanctions, and enforced by penalties? Do not the highest interests of that empire demand the upholding of these laws in their integrity? To allow their infraction, with impunity, or without a remedial measure evincing their authority and purity, would be to destroy all confidence in his rule, all respect for his requirements, and to open wide the flood-gates of moral evil. Would not sin be in the ascendant, would not the universe become a vast chaos—a scene of indescribable desolation and misery? The governor is bound to see to it that sin is found out and punished; and that is a doubtful morality which sympathises rather with the criminal than with the judge. What honest man would condemn Lord Campbell for cruelty because the judgment which he pronounces entails misery upon multitudes? Suppose he should allow the criminal, whose guilt is clearly proved, to go free at the bar, would not every right-minded man reprobate his conduct, and feel that he did not deserve to be judge? Were he to condemn and punish a man, who was proved to be innocent, all perceive that it would be unrighteous. But it would not be more unrighteous than the other. The one would be the violation of individual rights, the other the violation of the rights of society. To allow the law-breaker to go free without any sufficient reason would be a premium to crime. And if the Moral Governor of the universe did not see to it that sin meets with exposure and punishment, there would be a premium to transgression, which must be as dreadful in its consequences as the punishment of obedience and of virtue would be. The remedial scheme of mercy brands man's sin with the deepest infamy, and provides an honourable ground for his for-

giveness. The requirement of faith in it is no premium to hypocrisy, but arises manifestly out of the very nature of the case; faith being the only way in which the truth can benefit the mind, and in which man can be brought into harmony with the moral law. The ground on which we are called to believe is the truthfulness and the moral value of that which is presented to us. The doctrine of faith holds out a premium to a calm, unbiassed, and earnest examination of the truth and its evidence. It is the friend of morality, for the truth appeals to our sense of right and of gratitude, furnishing at once the severest condemnation of our sin, and the highest incentive to goodness. This is the appeal in Christ's words—'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more'; and I am charged with adding to the Book of Life, because I have shown, that, when fairly construed, it teaches reformation, not as the condition, but the fruit of forgiveness, and that if a connecting word is supplied, it must be 'therefore,' and not 'provided.' The principles on which God acts, in the pardon and punishment of sin, need introduce neither confusion nor mystification into our views of morality, inasmuch as they prove his determination to maintain the inviolability of the moral law, and give us the most exalted views of his justice and his benevolence. May not that character, as revealed and reflected in Jesus, be a model for moral imitation, even though we can neither make an atonement for sin, nor decide what shall be the future destiny of different classes of beings? Are there not principles of moral greatness embodied in the life of Jesus, which, if imbibed by men in general, would introduce universal order and happiness? Is there not a magnanimity, a heroic endurance, an invincibility of purpose, a meekness under wrongs, a devotedness to God, and a benevolence to man, which we would all do well to imitate, and which have stimulated to moral excellence some of the best and noblest of men that have ever lived?

We have heard Mr Holyoake's objections to Christianity stated with all the force and tact which many years' practice in debate can give; but though he has drawn up his own propositions, and taken his own course, I rather think he must be conscious that he has not done the things he ought to have done. Confidently I leave you to decide whether he has substantiated any of his charges. He objects to the doctrine—*not the fact*, as he calls it,

—of justification by faith; and yet must admit that Secularism has no benefits for those who do not believe in its principles, though disbelief cannot involve any serious loss as it has so little to give. He has laboured to prove, what I never denied, that justification by faith is taught in the Bible, when he should have adduced evidence, which can nowhere be found, that it is immoral in its tendency. He objects to our forgiveness on the ground of the great propitiation, but shows us no other way in which we can be delivered from the consequences of sin. He contends for justification by good conduct as useful among our fellowmen—a doctrine which Christ and his apostles taught eighteen centuries ago. He urges that good conduct should be equally available at the bar of God, but confesses that we have it not to bring, for *he admits the fact that we have sinned;* and seems to forget that an Omniscient Judge must look at the principles and motives of action, and it is from these alone that its real morality can be known. Repeatedly he presses the question, if man can be condemned for conscientious dissent, ignoring the fact that man *has committed actual sins for which he deserves condemnation,* that dissent from the divine scheme of mercy is not shown to be conscientious till it has been proved well-founded, and that even conscientiousness in the rejection of the only remedy can never save him from the moral malady of which he is the subject. Justification by organisation and circumstances is 'the leading fact' on which his Secularism is founded, and is one of the choicest 'guarantees' of its 'pure morality'! He objects to some of Christ's teachings on account of alleged ambiguity, and yet extorts from them a meaning, which men of honesty and candour, of critical acumen and profound research, have never found there—a meaning which, in some instances, a simple reading of the context or of the original renders utterly unwarrantable; and though he can appeal to contexts in other cases, he dreads that appeal in behalf of the New Testament. He objects to some precepts because they seem to him impracticable, though they have been practised by many of the wisest, the purest the noblest men that have ever lived—men like Fox, Howard, Clarkson, and Penn—men that have been consistent, uncompromising and earnest defenders of liberty, and who have done more to spread the principles of freedom and peace than any infidels of

this or of other lands. He refuses to appeal to the original to ascertain the meaning of any disputed passage, although I know of no one who believes in the infallibility of our translators but himself. If he seeks credit for an impartial spirit, by consulting an ordinary Greek scholar, he might get rid of some of his favourite illustrations of 'impracticability.' He regards some passages as disastrous in their influence, because he disregards a self-evident canon of interpretation, that language which, from the scope and connexion of any passage, is used figuratively, should not be understood in a literal sense—a canon which, if not applied to his own speeches and writings, would leave him to teach us that ministers of this town stand in 'sentry-boxes,' that 'the priests' are gamblers, for he says 'that they have leaded the dice with persecution,' and that the Secularists are raw recruits in the army of progress, for he represents them as undergoing 'drill'! Although all competent commentators and critics are against him in his interpretation of Scripture, we must not question his infallibility, but must listen to him, not only for 'advised' and 'revised statements' of Secularism, which has undergone sundry important phases during the first year of its existence, and which may give place to some 'new development of infidelity' six months hence, but we must receive from him the most authentic and authoritative expositions of Christian doctrine and precept! In examining the precepts of Christ he expects that he will speak as a God; in examining his moral character he expects him to act as a mere man, and takes no notice of his mission. When Christianity can be condemned by it, he takes the most figurative expressions literally, and the most literal expressions figuratively. He admits the resurrection of Christ from the dead, but tells us that it concerns him not, though it is '*the leading fact in Christianity*' of which he is in search—he admits it, and still pleasantly takes it for granted that Christ was a mere man, though he had the words of that risen Saviour before him—'I and my Father are one,' and 'Before Abraham was, I am.' He tells us first, that 'Christ's death wanted force of intellectual character,' and then 'force of intellectual conduct,' and he comes to this sage and charitable conclusion, not from what *is* said, but from what is *not* said, in a narrative that occupies less space than the history of

his own trial for atheism. In opposition to the entire spirit and facts of Christ's history, on mere suspicion, he can believe with Newman, that Christ was guilty of evasion, trickery, and deception; and yet he thinks it libellous if we do not regard himself as a paragon of candour! Such is the noble, generous, and manly criticism of the Secularist! The most stupendous miracle would not convince him of the truth of Christianity, and yet with amazing credulity he can believe in spite of his own consciousness that he is the creature of necessity, and in opposition to the universal consciousness of man, that his opinions and his character are formed for him, and that 'the dogma of free-will is a fatal error.' (Reasoner, vol. v. p. 385.) He can believe in Confucius, in Socrates, in Plato, in Arjoon, in Owen, in Paine, in Carlile, but not in Christ. He can believe in the Koran, the Bhagvat Geeta, and I know not what other books of antiquity, but not in the New Testament. Eternal damnation is the terrible thought that like nightmare oppresses him when he takes up that book, and not stopping to reflect that this may necessarily flow from man's present moral condition, and from his constitution as an immortal being, and not staying to look at the remedy which it provides, he runs away condemning it for its coarseness. But let him not suppose that, like the plague-ship, he is left unpitied to drift away to the loneliness of the sea; the heart of Infinite Love is yearning over him in tenderest pity: an unseen Friend is near to save him from his peril, and, under his safe pilotage, he might still reach the haven of eternal peace. Nor are there wanting among his fellowmen those who sympathise with him, who have passed through all the phases of scepticism, and who would rejoice that with them he could adopt the language of Kirke White, when the truth burst upon his mind:—

'Once on the raging seas I rode;
The storm was loud, the night was dark;
The ocean yawn'd, and rudely blow'd
The wind that toss'd my foundering bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze;
Death struck, I ceased the tide to stem,
When suddenly a star arose:
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all;
It bade my dark forebodings cease;

And, through the storm and danger's thrall,
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moor'd, my perils o'er,
I'll sing first in night's diadem,
For ever and for evermore,
The Star! the Star of Bethlehem!'

Mr RUTHERFORD proposed a' vote of thanks to the Chairmen and the two gentlemen who had so ably made arrangements for the discussion; which was seconded by Mr HOLYOAKE, and carried by acclamation. Mr BENSON acknowledged the vote, and the proceedings connected with the discussion closed.

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